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# **PUBLIC SCHOOL SLANG**

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UNIVERSITY SLANG

MORRIS MARPLES

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PUBLIC SCHOOL  
SLANG

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## PREFACE

SINCE Farmer's 'Public School Word-Book' was published in 1900 there has apparently been no comprehensive attempt to deal with the subject of school slang, though it is often referred to incidentally, and glossaries for individual schools have been compiled. I have tried here to put together this scattered material in such a way as to provide a full account of the sort of slang speech used in the public schools in the past and at the present day. No attempt has been made to include every word which has ever been current. to do this would be a Herculean, and in the end perhaps not very profitable, task. My method has been rather to exhibit quantities of specimens. These are grouped together under general headings, wherever such grouping seemed likely to throw light on the habits of school slang (see list on page xix). Otherwise they are treated separately. Cross-references have been provided for all words discussed in special articles, so that any word in which the reader is interested may be readily found. Since the slang of particular schools is also a matter of interest, all those schools which have contributed anything have been included alphabetically, under each reference a list of words associated with that school and in some cases a discussion (for a list of these articles, see page xvii).

A great deal of my material has been drawn from the letters and notes of several hundred very obliging and helpful correspondents, representing most of the important public schools and many others, who answered my original appeals in the press for information. These gentlemen, whom I have already thanked individually, I now again thank collectively for their very useful and indeed indispensable assistance. They are too numerous to mention by name: but each, if he examines this book, will probably recognize his own contribution.

Scottish and Irish material has been deliberately excluded as likely to confuse things. Whenever convenient, I have not hesitated, in spite of my title, to include words collected from grammar schools, of a class which could not be described as public schools (whatever may now be the definition of this species). In reality there is no hard-and-fast line either historically or linguistically between the two types. No particular effort has been made, however, to obtain the usages of these schools.

In addition to first-hand evidence, I have drawn largely on such glossaries of public school slang as I have encountered. School stories, especially of the nineteenth century, have also been laid under contribution; and I have examined many histories of particular schools and volumes of reminiscences, which often contain notes about the more striking school usages. Reference to these sources is only made where there is some particular point of interest.

One or two debts of gratitude remain to be paid separately. Special thanks are due to Mr. R. Harper of Bideford, for the loan of sundry books; Lt.-Col. E. Holt-Wilson, for sending me his 'Harrow Dictionary'; the Rev. A. L. Ivins, for an account of *snob* cricket at Marlborough, Mr. R. C. Johnston, for a Bootham glossary; Mr. H. Messenger, for letting me have a copy of an article he wrote on Colston's slang; the Rev. C. S. Morton, for an account of Tonbridge *stumper*, Mr. J. B. Oldham, Librarian of Shrewsbury School, for a comprehensive list of Shrewsbury slang; Mr. G. D. Summer, for a description of *piggy-wiggly-wagtail* as played at Framlingham; the Headmaster of Winchester and Messrs. P. and G. Wells, for permission to use extracts from 'Notions and Rules' and the 'Winchester Word-Book'; and Mr. Christopher Stone, for permission to quote from his 'Eton Glossary.' Finally, and above all, I am indebted to my wife and to my father for constant help, advice and criticism.

M. MARPLES.

March, 1939.

## INTRODUCTORY

It may well be asked whether school slang has any particular qualities which make it worthy of serious attention. There are some still who subscribe to the opinion of an early nineteenth century writer that 'the language of slang is the language of fools.' They regard it perhaps as something childish, which, if it is not sloughed off with advancing years, is merely a sign of mental arrestment. To some extent they are, of course, right. Slang is certainly a manifestation of the youthful spirit, even in those who are no longer young in years; the philosophy of life it implies is essentially juvenile. But they are wrong in regarding that which is childish as unworthy of notice. School slang is, of course, interesting and amusing to those who have not forgotten their own schooldays. But it has some claim to consideration on other and more serious grounds, both human and linguistic. It is very revealing of schoolboy psychology and the way the schoolboy looks at life and expresses himself about it. As a whole it presents—in broad outline—a definite picture of the English boy of public school class, and of the life led in our boarding schools: such a collection as this may be taken as complementary to those serious studies of the social aspects of school life which have appeared in recent years. Philologically also it is full of interest; its borrowings, derivations and coinages in themselves are of much more than trivial import, and as language in the raw, alive, earthy and vigorous, like all slang, it has qualities which more mature and formal idiom does not possess. In short, school slang is as much deserving of attention as the other types of slang which have recently become the subject of detailed studies.

What are the subconscious motives which compel us all at times to the use of slang? One of them is surely a feeling of impatience at the restraints of formal speech, a desire to kick over the traces, to break new ground, to get off the well-worn track. Slang is thus a kind of linguistic adventure, and it is worth noting that it is often strongest in circumstances where real adventure is impossible.

At the same time, slang expresses that discontent which every new generation feels with the achievements of its predecessors. It knocks the idols off their pedestals and sets up something new. In this respect slang represents linguistic novelty, and it does so even in the case of slang words which have themselves been current for many years; they are felt to be different from the accepted terms, new in that respect.

Again, slang often implies a desire to startle or shock the older generation by its audacity, its grotesqueness and sometimes by its impropriety (which, however, is not quite so prominent as some strait-laced purists have imagined). Respect, approval and admiration, though not unknown to slang, are rare; but it is often irreverent, prone to derision and mockery, strongly depreciatory, and whenever opportunity offers, satirical and scornful. These qualities, however, are generally tempered, in English slang at any rate, by a sense of humour which prevents bitterness.

All this is pre-eminently youthful, and we shall find it exemplified to the full in school slang, to a more detailed examination of which we now turn.

Considered as a whole, school slang faithfully reflects the outlook of the schoolboy, his interests, his aversions, the preoccupations of his daily life, his reactions to the problems of school existence, and the personalities he encounters. The aversions account for a very substantial part of the whole, as might be expected. It is only necessary to turn to the section **DISAPPROVAL** to discover how vigorous and effective schoolboy invective can be. Apart from these general expressions (many of which are not exclusive to schools), school slang is well supplied with derogatory terms descriptive of the unpopular

characters of school life, such as the *cad*, the *jcw*, the *sneak*, the *funk*, the *oiler*, the *swank* and the *swat*, to name only some of the most prominent. Nor do such words stand alone; each is surrounded by a group of synonyms. It is indeed very striking how words tend to fall easily into this classification. The complexities of real life become simplified when they are reflected in slang—we are dealing with types and not with individuals.

In general, to judge from his language, the schoolboy disapproves of, despises, or at best merely tolerates most of the people with whom he comes in contact. (That this is nothing more than a superficial impression one readily recognizes.) The most scathing contempt is reserved for new boys, and indeed small boys in general, to whom such terms as *brat*, *tick*, *squit*, *bug*, *scum* and *scug* are widely applied (see *BOY*, *fag* and *NEW BOY*), and any undue uppishness on their part is severely condemned (see *cheek*). The opposite sex likewise is treated very cavalierly, though one detects here a certain self-consciousness about the air of indifference implied by such words as *hag* (see *MAID*, *WOMAN*). School servants, especially men servants (*q v.*), are referred to in a tone of benign superiority. For the *blood*, the leader of school society, there is a somewhat critical admiration, which sometimes turns to sarcasm (see *blood*). In this connection also may be mentioned a very interesting group of expressions dealing with what a boy may or may not do under certain circumstances, as laid down by the social code: what is permitted in the *blood* is generally forbidden in others (see *PRIVILEGE-TABOO*, *swank*).

In the case of masters and prefects (see *HEADMASTER*, *MASTER*, *PREFECT*) a jocular and sometimes ribald, but never unfriendly, acceptance of the situation seems to be the main note of the slang which they inspire; but there are also many colourless terms, which are simply short and handy equivalents for the standard word. Slang at all times tends to substitute its own synonym for a commonly used word, however simple it may be: thus boys *chuck*, *bing*, *heave* or *shy* instead of throwing; they *biff*, *clout* or *lam* where others hit; they *boot*, *hack* or *hoof* instead of kicking, and they are fond of abbreviation.

There seems to be behind this a subconscious feeling that these unorthodox words are more alive and vigorous: the user is having a dig at things, making his mark, just like the British workman who retaliates upon an unfriendly world with strings of *bloodys*. For the same reason the majority of school slang words are monosyllabic: the monosyllable hits hard.

One very interesting group of words consists of those applied to the townspeople. There is undoubted snobbery here, and a veiled hostility surviving from the days when miniature town and gown rows were possible in any town or village which contained a public school. The large number of words existing shows the importance and prominence of this relationship in school life; most schools possess their own word. It is significant, too, that in most cases the word may be also applied to anyone whose manners, speech or character falls below the supposed public school standard: *cad* itself is the outstanding example. The other side to the picture—what the townspeople think of the boys at the school—has perhaps not been recorded.

It is inevitable that food and punishment should loom large in school slang, for they loom large in school life, and did so to an even greater extent in the past. For some reason food inspires a particular kind of satirical nasty-mindedness, exemplified in such terms as *cats'-eyes-in-phlegm* (=sago pudding), *boiled baby* (=roly-poly), and *quiddle* (=spit, i.e. custard). There is a perennial dissatisfaction with school food, which still continues, even now that it is in most cases unjustified, and it seems to find fitting expression in this way. Most of these terms are quite ephemeral, and every school must be constantly putting up new examples.

In the matter of punishment school slang is particularly prolific. The cane has made its mark on the collective juvenile mentality, and there are dozens of synonyms (see BIRCH, CANE). It would probably be correct to describe most of these as euphemisms—subconscious attempts to avoid using the bare, unvarnished word. The fact that they are often no less forceful than *cane* itself, and sometimes more so, does not affect the position. But

in a few cases deliberate meiosis is employed, not without humour, as when *brush* becomes a synonym for *birch*, or an expression denoting some attendant circumstance of the caning becomes transferred to the caning itself, as with *cock up*, *turn up* and *have over*, all referring to the position assumed, or the still more delicate Harrovian *send up* (i.e. to the headmaster), which in 1906 had become synonymous with *birch*. Similarly the forbidding word *expel* is generally transmuted into the milder *bunk* or *sack*. Of other punishments there have been innumerable different varieties, some in the past of great ferocity; some specimens of the phraseology associated with these will be found under IMPOSITION and PUNISHMENT (various).

There are two prominent groups of words connected with school work, and their nature throws a lurid light on the British schoolboy's attitude to his studies. One of these is concerned with failure in examination and the presentation of badly done work (reference to *plough* will put the reader on the track of many words of this type), the other with dishonest work or cheating (see under *crib*), this latter a group of some importance. The existence of these—taking into consideration, too, the *swat* group—is no great testimony to the real success of the English educational system, and of the philosophy it engenders, unless we are to assume that the English boy is by nature work-shy.

It must not be imagined, however, that school slang concerns itself solely with the darker side of school life. There is much light-hearted and not very profound humour, typified by such words as *belly-go-round* (=belt), *heifer* (=charwoman), *gig-lamps* or *head-lights* (=spectacles), and many others equally trivial. Sometimes the joke is a little more subtle: Charterhouse has a cake called *he* in reference to a well-known song (see CAKE), and King Edward's, Birmingham, at one time made ingenious use of Acts ix. 43 in adopting *simon* as a synonym for *cane* (see CANE). Satire, too, of a harmless kind is found in many expressions such as *tramp* (=master), *beano* (=Communion), *bug-wash* (=hair-oil), *taa* (=chapel collection) and *cramps* (=prayers). Such

satire, it will be noticed, often involves irreverence. The motive behind this is doubtless the anxiety to avoid seeming to take things too seriously, which is both typically English and typically youthful: when adults are present, the desire to shock also manifests itself. But bitterness seldom enters into schoolboy satire, though the old Christ's Hospital *cake*, for a stroke with the cane, denoting apparently what you receive when you hold out your hand, comes very near it.

The schoolboy, too, is quite capable of expressing his satisfaction in clear and vigorous terms, and under APPROVAL will be found a collection of his favourite words, the majority of which he shares with slangsters in general. Most of them are disyllabic in this case, and somewhat vague in their application, though always forceful. More recently a method of expressing praise by understatement (as with *not bad*, *not too bad*, *not half bad*, all meaning *very good*) has become popular, and causes distress at times to the older generation, who expect something more enthusiastic than this apparently grudging or limited approval. This, again, is only a habit due to self-consciousness and the fear of being too enthusiastic.

Something must now be said of the sources of school slang. It might be supposed that idioms and words used by boys would be mostly of their own invention. But though there are many which can be so described, one of the main interests of school slang lies in the fact that it owes so much to external influences, mainly in the past. This does not apply equally to all schools. Bootham slang, for example, is largely modern schoolboy creation. Colston's slang is perhaps the same, but rather of the nineteenth than the twentieth century. On the other hand, Westminster, Christ's Hospital, and most of all Winchester, have a speech rich in relics of the past, and moulded by many influences at different times. No other school can even approach Winchester in this respect, and its slang, of which many examples are here included, is worth a detailed study in itself.

A good deal of school slang consists of words which

were once current in ordinary English, but have long since become obsolete, or survive only in dialect. Naturally this is most marked in schools (like Winchester and Christ's Hospital) where efforts are made to preserve and perpetuate the language of the past, and these provide most of the Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan vocabulary recorded here. There seems little doubt that if we knew as much about the early speech of some other schools as we do about the Wykehamist language, more survivals of this kind would come to light. At the same time it is probably true that some schools were more given to slang than others, and that a rich vernacular did not necessarily accompany ancient traditions and a life of monastic seclusion.

Local dialect has made a considerable contribution to school slang—such familiar words as *swank* and *punt* may be instanced—but its influence is now much less than it was a century ago. In the first place many of the present public schools were then grammar schools, drawing their pupils from the surrounding area and from widely different social classes, who naturally brought the local speech, itself at the time more individual than it is now, into the schools. In the second place, whereas today a boy living in an urban or suburban district may never hear a word of dialect except when he goes to Devonshire or the Lake District on holiday, a century ago the boys who attended public schools as boarders must constantly have been in touch with the local dialect when they were at home (as indeed we may infer from 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'); hence the examples of dialect words from a distance which took root in certain schools—even Scottish words have occasionally become current in this way. The modern counterpart of this is the infiltration of Americanisms, very marked in some schools (such as Dulwich), where the influence of the cinema is strong.

It is natural that the national slang as a whole should have strongly permeated the speech of schools; in fact, no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the two, and no attempt is made here to do so. In particular, cant or thieves' slang and sporting slang have contributed

largely. From these sources come *beak* ; *crib* ; *blab*, *split* and *peach* ; *cop*, *nail*, *nab* and *pinch* ; *mill* ; *dibs* and *oof*, and the names of individual coins. Such words may have been adopted in some cases at a time when boys were more interested in various forms of illicit sport, and the gambling associated with them, than they are today, and consequently came more into contact with what may be called low characters. But they may equally well have come by way of general slang, and not direct from their original sources.

It may be noted that school slang often enriches a word it has adopted by extending its uses and developing it in all sorts of ways. This happened with the familiar *fag* a century ago, but recently there have been even more striking instances. *Oil* and *fug* (*q.v.*), for example, have each become the centre of an ever-widening group of allied notions, which gather rapidly about them in snowball fashion as time passes. Standard language is incapable of such very elastic interpretation of metaphor, and is in some ways the poorer thereby.

Two other rich sources of school slang are the universities and, since the last Great War, the Army, to both of which a special article is devoted. Each has contributed a good deal of very distinctive idiom: in the case of the universities a mutual give-and-take process must have been going on for centuries and still continues.

Finally must be mentioned the debt which school slang owes to Latin, and to a smaller extent to Greek (each of which is treated separately). Centuries of almost exclusively classical education have naturally had their effect, and an interesting residue of Greek and Latin remains, some of it in everyday use among boys who know nothing of the classics. It may be added that it was at one time fashionable to ascribe school slang words on the slenderest grounds to classical origins, and some such derivations are certainly false: a small collection of them will be found under FALSE ETYMOLOGY.

I have indicated in brief outline the main interests of school slang, the reasons for its existence, the attitudes it expresses, and the sources from which it springs. In

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the pages which follow will be found much in amplification of these introductory remarks, for it has been the aim throughout, not merely to list words, but to interpret the feelings behind them, to treat them as a commentary on public school life, and to relate them as far as possible to reality, both past and present.

**LIST OF SCHOOLS INCLUDED**

**XVIII**

REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL	*SHREWSBURY STONYHURST
ROSSALL	SUTTON VALENCE
*RUGBY	TETTENHALL COLLEGE
ST BEES	TONBRIDGE
ST EDMUND'S, CANTER- BURY	TRENT COLLEGE
ST LAWRENCE'S, RAMS- GATE	UPPINGHAM
ST PAUL'S	WARWICK SCHOOL
SHERBORNE	WELLINGTON
	*WESTMINSTER
	*WINCHESTER

## GENERAL ARTICLES

The following is a list of special articles, each dealing with a group of words connected in meaning, in origin, or otherwise. Capital letters denote that the title itself is not a slang expression.

ABBREVIATION

ANGRY

APPROVAL

ARMY SLANG

*bag, pinch*

*Bags*

*belly*

BIG

BIRCH

*blood, buck, swell*

*blub*

BOY

BREAD

BULLY

*bungy*

*cad*

CAKE

CANE

*cheek*

COMMUNION

*cop*

*crib*<sup>1</sup>

CROWD

*cut*

DAY BOY

*dib up*

DISAPPROVAL

DORMITORY

DRINK

*effort*

-ER SUFFIX

EXCLAMATIONS

FACE

*fag*<sup>1</sup>

FALSE ETYMOLOGY

*fed-up*

FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF

GOOD-BYE

GREEK

HAT

HEAD

HEADMASTER

HIT

IMPOSITION

*jew*

KICK

LATIN

LAVATORIES

*lick*

LIE

MAID

*major, etc.*

MAN SERVANT

MASTER

*mill*

MONEY

NEW BOY

NICKNAMES

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NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)	<i>Shut up</i>
NONSENSE	SMELL
<i>oil</i>	<i>sneak</i>
<i>people</i>	<i>suck</i>
PREFECT	<i>swank</i>
PRIVILEGE-TABOO	<i>swat</i>
PROMOTION	THROW
PUDDING	<i>throw, keep, park</i>
PUNISHMENT (various)	<i>tuck</i>
<i>rag</i>	UNIVERSITY SLANG
<i>row</i>	WARNING CRIES
RUN	WOMAN

## KEY

OED=Oxford English Dictionary.

PSWB=Public School Word-Book, J. S. Farmer, 1900.

WB=Winchester Word-Book, R. G. K. Wrench, 1901.

NB=Notions and Rules (Winchester Notion Book),  
A.T.P.W., 1930.

+ after a date (e.g. 1916+) means that the use of the word in question, as recorded, begins with that date.

- after a date (e.g. 1880-) means that the use of the word in question, as recorded, covers a period ending with that date.

A date without + or - refers generally to a glossary or collection of words published or made in that year (e.g. 'Bootham, 1925' denotes a collection of Bootham slang made in 1925).

N.B.—Dates given are in every case drawn from the notes of correspondents or from books or glossaries: they should in no case be regarded as giving more than a general indication as to period.

The name of a school given in parenthesis indicates the source from which a word or a usage was contributed: it does not imply that the word or usage is confined to that school.



**ABBREVIATION** is natural to all colloquial speech, slang or otherwise, and especially in the case of juvenile speech. Boys habitually abbreviate most of the long words in regular use among them: hence, in the first place, a very large number of simple abbreviations (generally the first syllable or two of the original word) which are used and understood everywhere—e.g. *arith.*, *cert* (=certainty), *cube* (=cubicle), *dorm* (=dormitory), *ex* (=exercise), *exam.*, *geog.*, *gym* (=gymnasium or gymnastics), *hols* (=holidays), *lab* (=laboratory), *maths.*, *pav* (=pavilion), *pi* (=pious), *pre* (=prefect), *prep* (=preparation), *priv* (=privilege), *pro* (=professional), *ref* (=referee), *rep* (=repetition), *san* (=sanatorium), *schol* (=scholarship), *sub* (=subscription or substitute), *tu* (=tuition), *vill* (=village), *vocab.* Harrow at various periods has had others of this class less generally known—e.g. *con* (=construe), *compul* (=compulsory), *dic* (dictionary), *div* (=division), *ex* (=exeat—i.e. leave of absence), *pri* (=private school), *pupe* (=pupil room), *schol* (=scholar), *sig* (=signature), *vol* (=voluntary); and the same is doubtless the case elsewhere—e.g. at Charterhouse *lib coll* (=library collection), *muse* (=museum)

But some schools have their own particular method of abbreviation. Thus Winchester and Charterhouse favour a vowel termination—e.g. *examina* (=examination), *illumina* (=illumination), *remi* (=remission), *tui* (=tuition) from Winchester, *degra* (=degradation), *enterta* (=entertainment), *impo* (=imposition), *promo* (=promotion), *squo* (=squash) from Charterhouse. Manchester Grammar School (PSWB) used formations in -y—e.g. *chemmy*, *ecky* (=exercise), *gymmy*, *mathy*, *punny* (=punishment), in preference to the sometimes shorter and more usual abbreviations of the words in question: this is, of course, relatively common—e.g. *dormy*, *pavvy* (=pavilion), *sanny* (=sanatorium: Forest, 1980+). Colston's (1887)

had two popular types, one in *-s*—e.g. *blots* (=blotting paper), *detens* (=detention), *impots*, *paps* (=paper), *swips* (=soap), the other by omission of *s*—e.g. *cla* (=class), *gla* (=glass), *gra* (=grass). Imperial Service College (1910+) possessed three abbreviations of a curious type, *crisch* (=cricket), *foosch* (=football) and *hosch* (=hockey), the last of which is said to have been introduced deliberately, but failed to take root.

Like many other of the tendencies of school slang, fashions in abbreviation are constantly changing. The simplest forms, such as those first mentioned above, remain fairly constant; other methods of abbreviation also may become traditional in particular schools, as in the case of the two Colston's types described, which were current at least from 1887 to 1922. Apart from this there is a large body of fluctuating and ephemeral formations, coined according to some short-lived craze, and quickly perishing: readers will readily think of examples from their own experience.

See also *-ER SUFFIX* for a method of word formation which often amounts to abbreviation.

**abroad** (Winchester, WB, NB), out of the sick room—e.g. 'He has been *abroad* since Monday.' The opposite is *continent*. As Wrench points out in the WB, these idioms would have been readily understood by Shakespeare's contemporaries, but are quite unfamiliar to modern Englishmen. The verbal phrases are *to come abroad* and *to go continent*.

**abs** (Winchester): see **LATIN** [4]

**absit**: see **LATIN** [2]

**ack, ick** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), a negative, sometimes stated to be of Gipsy origin—e.g. 'Lend me your book.' '*Ack*.'

**adsum**: see **LATIN** [2]

**advertise** (Marlborough): see *swank*.

**aeger, aegrotat**: see **LATIN** [2]

**ALDENHAM**: see

*indignagger* (*-ER SUFFIX*)     *jack*

**ALLEYN'S SCHOOL**: see

*mouse eating*

*rush (crib<sup>1</sup>)*

*weed (MASTER)*

**ALLHALLOWS**: see

*brickly (cad)*

*pick-up (cad)*

**angel** (Bootham). see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**ANGRY**. Few weaknesses are more derided among boys than losing the temper. Consequently the slang vocabulary to meet the situation is both extensive and forceful, with, in some cases, a pretty dash of satire. The following expressions are or have been current:

**baty, in a bate**—c g 'He's in a frightful *bate*'

**bored**: the word is used much more elastically than in standard English.

**bucked** (Bushey, 1907+): see *buck* [13]

**in a crab** (Friar's, Bangor, 1915+): as a verb *crab* has a wider slang use in the sense of *insult, offend*.

**to go off the deep end**=to lose one's temper.

**in a dink** (Bushey, 1907+) hence *Dinky* as a nickname.

**frouf** (Winchester, WB). said to be the past participle of *fright*, so used in Hampshire dialect.

**to lose one's hair, to get one's wool off**=to be angry: hence 'Keep your *hair* on' addressed to anyone in danger of losing his temper.

**to lose** (Rossall, 1930+), *temper*, etc., being understood.

**mad**: in common use, but recorded as a Winchester idiom in Wrench's WB (1901)

**peeved**.

**to get the pumsey** (Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, 1924+): also of other emotions, delight, moodiness, etc.

**ratty, in a rat, to lose one's rat**: probably from *irate*.  
**rattled**.

**riled**.

**shirty, to lose one's shirt, or get one's shirt out**.

**snarky**.

**sweaty, in a sweat**.

**in a swot** (Shrewsbury, PSWB)

**vishy, in a vish** (Christ's Hospital, 1907+), the offender being taunted with cries of '*Vish!*': from *vicious*.

**waxy, in a wax.**

**worked up.**

Various shades of meaning, covering everything from furious anger to slight annoyance or ruffling of the temper, may of course be detected in the above list.

See also *fed up*.

**APPROVAL.** Though the schoolboy has a genius for invective (see **DISAPPROVAL**), he can nevertheless express his satisfaction forcefully, if without much attention to the niceties of vocabulary. The words used for the purpose are more or less synonymous in meaning, and quite general in application: vigour is their main characteristic, and it matters little how or when they are used, provided they are able to intensify the speaker's expression of approval. As with other words of this type, the fashions change from generation to generation, and readers will recognize that the words of their youth are no longer the words of today.

Comparatively few words expressing general approval are limited to particular schools: *chaffy* (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840: see *chaff*<sup>2</sup>), *hefty* (Friars', Bangor, 1918+), *hot*, *luscious*, *mellow* (Bootham, 1925) are examples of this class. (In most cases these are good standard words used in unusual senses, and for that reason tend to pass out of fashion very quickly.) The majority are universally current, used not only by schoolboys everywhere, but by the youthful, or would-be youthful, public at large. In the following list of such words the OED date for the earliest usage is given, wherever possible, as an indication of the age and period of each expression.

**brick.** The word is a noun, used less commonly now than in the past to express high approval of an individual person—e.g. 'You are a *brick*' (earliest date 1840, 'a regular *brick*'): characteristic nineteenth century phrases were 'a jolly *brick*' and 'no end of a *brick*.' The usage is probably derived

from *like a brick*—with good will, vigorously (1886), with the implication of weight. See *trump* below for a synonym.

**capital** (1762): highly popular during the nineteenth century, but now definitely outmoded.

**classy**: characteristically an early twentieth-century word.

**corking**. A *corker* (1837) was originally something which settled the matter, hence something or someone remarkable—e.g. 'a *corker* at singing' (Phillpotts, 'The Human Boy,' 1899): *corking* (not in the OED) follows by analogy with *ripping*, etc.

**decent**—e.g. 'a *decent* chap': for nearly half a century the word has been one of the highest schoolboy compliments.

**first-rate** (1812)

**fizzing** (1885): perhaps implying speed, like *rattling*, *ripping*.

**jolly**: mainly in slang an intensive adverb, almost equivalent to *very*—e.g. *jolly good*, *jolly fine*, even *jolly bad*, *jolly rotten*, *jolly nearly*, and in this slang sense going back about a century (first recorded for 1838, Dickens, '*jolly green*'). Before that the usage had been good standard English: in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries its status was of the highest, as these quotations, which tend to raise a smile in the modern reader, will indicate: 'a *jolye* fortunate man' (Coverdale, 1549), 'All was *jolly* quiet at Ephesus before St Paul came thither' (Trapp, 'Commentary on Matthew,' 1647)

**prime**—e.g. 'That'll be *prime*'; it was common from the seventeenth century onwards in serious contexts, and probably became colloquial during the nineteenth century.

**rattling**: originally an adjective descriptive of speed, but applied more widely from c. 1690; as an adverb used like *jolly* it is first recorded for 1829 ('a *rattling* fine dinner')

**ripping**. Like *rattling* it was used originally of speed (1826). Thus *ripper* (1888) became an

accepted term for a good fast ball at cricket. From this beginning the word extended its usefulness in an extraordinary way until in its heyday it might be used in praise of anything and everything—a *ripping* holiday, a *ripping* book, a *ripping* girl, etc., any of which might also be referred to as a *ripper*.

**scrumpitious, scrummy** (1836 for the slang use—e.g. 'a *scrumpitious* feed'); curiously enough its original sense was almost exactly the opposite—namely *mean* in dialect, and hence *fastidious*.

**spiffing** (1872). A *spiff* was a general slang term for a well-dressed man.

**stunning** (1849), **stunner** (1848)—c.g. 'She's a *stunner*.' The slang usage was clearly unknown when the writer of a Cambrian Directory (1801) could speak in all seriousness of 'a *stunning* cataract.'

**super**: an abbreviation of *superfine*, used from 1842 as a trade term in reference to wool, silk, etc.; its arrival as slang or colloquialism is much more recent, and is perhaps due to advertising or journalistic uses.

**tipping** (1887): an occasional variant of *topping* (*q.v.*).

**tophole**: originally up to the top hole (1899)· as an adjective, *top-hole*, 1908.

**topping** (1822): implying something which overtops everything else. It was so used in standard English—e.g. '*topping* mountains' (1691), and even after the development of the slang sense, as when Browning (1864) wrote 'a *topping* tree.'

**trump** (1819): used like *brick* (*q.v.*) in complimentary reference to an individual; the metaphor is, of course, from cards.

**wunner**, otherwise *one-er* (1840, Dickens). It occurs in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' ('You are a *wunner* for bottling the swipes'), and was still popular just before the last war, when it was made familiar to many through the refrain of a music-hall song, 'By gad! he's a *wunner*, a *ripper*, a *stunner*.'

**ARMY SLANG.** Before the Great War of 1914-1918 the Army had made little contribution to school slang. *Swat* (*q.v.*) is said to have come from Sandhurst, and one or two words from oriental sources must surely have been brought to this country by soldiers—e.g. *cheese* (*q.v.*), which is probably Hindustani *chiz*=thing, *bint* (=girl; Arabic), and *dekkho* (*q.v.*=look; Hindustani). But during and since the Great War school (as well as national) slang has been enriched by numerous idioms which owe their origin to the services, and principally to the Army. From the collection given in Fraser and Gibbons' 'Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases' (1925) some fifty expressions were in regular use in one public school at any rate just after the war. Many have probably died out since, but there remains a substantial residue of idioms which are still very much alive, both inside and outside schools. These include such indispensable nouns as *gadget*, *stunt*, *dud*, *oojah*, *wash-out* and *back-chat*; adjectives like *posh*, *umpteenth*, *fed-up* (which is pre-war army slang) and *wonky*; and a rich profusion of verbal phrases, *to get the wind up*, *to throw one's weight about*, *to do the dirty*, *to get it in the neck*, *to get down to it*, *to put it across someone*, *to scrounge*, *to have someone taped*, *to tell or tick off* and *to wangle*. Most of these are so useful that they will probably last for a considerable time, and some will doubtless qualify in the end as standard English.

See *fed-up* for certain further developments of this idiom.

**asspeece** (St Lawrence's, 1919+), sort, kind—e.g. 'A marine is an *asspeece* of soldier and sailor combined.' A probably ephemeral coinage suggested by a master's habit of beginning an explanation with 'C'est une espèce de . . .'

For other French, see *sans*, *skee*.

**atramentarius** (Stonyhurst): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**back up** (Winchester WB, NB), shout, call out—e.g. 'I *backed up*, but nobody heard me': originally perhaps in football only.

**bag**<sup>1</sup> (Westminster): see **DRINK**.

**bag,<sup>2</sup> pinch.** Among boys the distinction between stealing and borrowing is at times somewhat ill-defined, especially at boarding schools, where anyone may appropriate someone else's book or football jersey without feeling particularly dishonest. Hence a certain vagueness about the vocabulary used to describe such appropriation. The words of the moment are *bag* and *pinch*. Both are useful, for their meanings overlap. A boy may *pinch* (=borrow) his friend's blotting-paper, or a thief may *pinch* (=steal) a pearl necklace. While *bag* might have been used in both these examples, it also means *reserve* or *engage*—e.g. '*Bag me a seat*'—and when a boy wants anything which is being given away or awaits the first claimant, he may shout '*Bags I.*' (See *Bags* for a discussion of this particular idiom and its equivalents.) Winchester had an exact equivalent for *bag* in all its senses in *jockey* (*q.v.* for details), while Westminster used *box*. It is interesting to note that *pinch* in this sense goes back to the fourteenth century, when it was used of appropriating pieces of land, pinching the rightful owner. *Bag* seems to belong to the eighteenth century.

A number of other words are or have been used of stealing or appropriating—e.g. *sneak* (*q.v.*; perhaps never of genuine stealing); *crib* (in Farrar's novel '*St Winifred's*,' 1863); *nick*; *lift*; and *bone*, the last perhaps rather pedantically jocular towards the end of its career, which is now coming to an end in the speech of the elderly generation. *Snaffle* (Forest, 1920+) and *prig* (Warwick, 1930+), though rather typically nineteenth-century words, seem to be still current. A few uses are confined to particular schools—e.g. *rush* (Marlborough, 1930+), *grip* (Shrewsbury, 1938), *snitch* (Cheltenham, 1916+), the last probably a variant of *snatch*. *Nobble* was used at Shrewsbury (c. 1820) precisely of that appropriation of hats, books and similar articles now expressed by *pinch* or *bag*. *Shark* at Forest School (1920+) was used very suitably of stealing food.

See *cop* for another sense of *grip* and *pinch*; and *crib*<sup>1</sup> and *jew* for other senses of *rush*.

**bags, trousers.** Though it has had a definite vogue since 1918, this is not by any means a new word. Hotten

records it in his 'Slang Dictionary' (1859) as 'upper-class slang,' and it was the word used at Shrewsbury in the 1870's to denote the long white trousers worn at that time for football. (Shorts were first introduced at Shrewsbury in 1888.) At Rugby (1926+) and many other schools *bim-bags*=bathing drawers.

**Bags.** An interesting idiomatic use of *bag* (see above) is found in the expressions *Bags I* and *Bags not*. The first of these asserts a prior claim to whatever is being offered, the second establishes exemption from anything unpleasant: in each case the exclamation must be uttered quickly, the first to say *Bags I* indeed securing the prize. The ungrammatical form of the verb is perhaps due to the need for ease and rapidity in pronunciation: but cf. *I votes*—e.g. '*I votes* we play cricket,' where this need does not arise.

There are several synonyms for one or both of these expressions:

**Chucks on, Bar on:** the real predecessors of *Bags I*, *Bags not*, common thirty years ago, and not entirely obsolete. The spelling *Checks* is sometimes found, but *Chucks* is preferable: it may be connected with an old school slang word *chuck*=treat, anything enjoyable. *Bar* can also be used as a verb—e.g. 'He wanted me to do it, but I *barred not*': possibly *chuck* also.

**Jockey not** (Winchester, WB)=*Bags not*: see *jockey* for other uses of the word.

**Pike I, Prior pike**, both=*Bags I*: *pike* is evidently a survival of the obsolete verb *pike*=pick, choose: see under **THROW** for *pike*=throw.

**Tuz I** (Felsted, PSWB)=*Bags I*: no explanation is given for this curious expression.

More to the point will be found under *fen*: cf. also *paw* and *quis* (both under **LATIN** [1])

**bake** (Winchester, WB), to rest, lie at ease: *bakester*=one who does so: *baking leave*=permission to *bake*. Like *bask*, the word (which has dialect connections) must have originally implied resting in the warmth.

**baker** (Winchester, WB, NB), a cushion: explained as=*banker*, a cushion for a bench, and not to be connected with *bake* above.

**banco** (Charterhouse, 1882+), evening preparation, presumably from the benches used. It is said to have been coined by a certain H. W. Phillott in 1882, and has remained in use ever since.

**bangy** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. brown sugar, 2. brown. Of several suggested derivations, perhaps the only one remotely probable is from *Bangalore*, which is a sugar-growing district. *Bangy bags* or *bangies* (PSWB) were brown trousers, to which strong objection was taken.

**Bar**: see under *Bags*.

**barbar** (Durham): see LATIN [1]

**barge**<sup>1</sup>: see HAT.

**barge**<sup>2</sup> (Charterhouse): see CROWD.

**barmy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**Barnet** (Christ's Hospital), **Barney**: see EXCLAMATIONS.

**bars** (Bootham): see BREAD [2]

**barter** (Winchester, WB, NB), a half-volley at cricket: so called after Warden Barter (1832-61), whose drastic treatment of such deliveries was famous. *Bartering*=fielding practice.

See also *lob*,<sup>1</sup> *ramrod*.

**base** (Harrow), the goal in Harrow football, consisting of two uprights without a cross-bar.

See also *shy*, *yards*.

**bash**: see HIT.

**basher**: see HAT.

**basonite** (Charterhouse). see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**bate**, **baty**: see ANGRY.

**bath-flunkey** (Eastbourne): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**battels**: an allowance in money or kind, intended to supplement the ordinary food provided. Thus at Eton *battels* meant small portions of food which Collegers were allowed to receive from their dames in addition to the regular college allowance. At Winchester *battlings* de-

noted pocket money (ls. c. 1840), or, earlier, any allowance of money to supplement the meagre fare on Fridays and other fast days. At Oxford *battels* is still used of an undergraduate's account for food and other services, though here, too, it was formerly applied only to expenses in excess of an accepted figure.

The word is many centuries old, both as a noun and a verb (*to battel*=to spend one's allowance, to obtain provisions from the college). It originally had a much more general sense, as a verb=feed, nourish, as in '*battling pastures*' (Greene, 1590)

**batty**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**baulk** (Winchester, WB, NB), a false report or rumour: *to sport a baulk*=to start a rumour. The idea seems to be that such a report baulks or hinders the reputation of the person about whom it is spread.

**beadle** (Christ's Hospital): see MAN SERVANT.

**beak**: see MASTER, PREFECT.

**beam** (Christ's Hospital): see *bim*.

**beanfielder** (Felsted, PSWB), a powerful hit at cricket, doubtless because at one time such hits landed in a beanfield.

**beano**<sup>1</sup> (Cheltenham): see COMMUNION.

**beano**<sup>2</sup> (Shrewsbury, 1938), a bayonet: a corruption of the word *bayonet*, and not likely to last long.

**Beards** (Leys): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**beast**: see *cad*.

**beastly**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**beat**: see CANE.

**beat it**: see RUN.

**beat off** (Eton): see CANE.

**beaver**, beard, or bearded man. The word owes its origin to a game popular at Oxford soon after the last war. Players had to watch for men wearing beards (of whom there were perhaps more in Oxford than elsewhere), and whoever first cried '*Beaver*' on seeing a bearded man scored one point. There were several special scores, as for *red beaver*, the highest of all being *royal beaver*. Though the game is now forgotten, the word is still occasionally heard: its source seems to be unknown.

**BEDALES** : see

*gutter* (cad)

*hurf*

*kiddy*

*skunk* (cut)

**BEDFORD** : see *buck* (*buck* [5], *cad*)

**beer** (Felsted), *cocoa* : see **DRINK**.

**beggar** (Westminster, c. 1900), *sugar*.

**bellering cake** : see **CAKE**.

**belly**. This sound old word is still vigorously active among boys (and not only among boys, of course), though prudery has banished it from polite speech. Jocular synonyms are *gizzard* and *pot* (presumably that into which everything goes), with the variant *pop* (Christ's Hospital, 1885+); hence *potty*=fat (St Bees, 1915+) and *pot-ache*=stomach-ache.

**belly-go-round** (St Bees, 1915+), *belt* : suggested by *merry-go-round*.

**belt** : see **HIT**.

**betty** (Bootham): see **MAID, WOMAN**.

**bevers**. At Winchester, Westminster, Eton and probably other schools, light refreshment consisting of bread and cheese with beer was served at what is now tea-time. This was commonly called *bevers*, an ancient word akin to *beverage*, in common use from the sixteenth century. When the practice of serving *bevers* was abandoned, the afternoon interval at Winchester continued to be known as *bever-time* (WB)

**bibler, bibling** (Winchester, obs. 1900): six strokes administered by means of a *bibling-rod*: later, any flogging. (Four strokes were known as a *scrubbing*, three as a *scouring*.) The *bibling-rod*, which is said to have been invented by Warden Baker in 1454, was an ingenious refinement upon the orthodox birch, consisting of a long handle with four apple twigs attached to the end by a thong: a representation of it occurs in a mural decoration at the school, illustrating one of the school mottoes, '*Aut disce aut discede : manet sors tertia, caedi*'—'Either learn or go: there remains a third possibility, a *bibling*.' It probably took its name from the *bible-clerk*, a prefect on duty (who read from the Bible at meals), one of whose

functions was to collect the names of offenders. The word *bibling* continued in use long after the *bibling-rod* had been relegated to a museum.

For other corporal punishment, see BIRCH, CANE, PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**BIDEFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL:** see *Pluto* (MAN SERVANT)

**Bidge** (Rugby): see HEADMASTER.

**biff:** see CANE, HIT.

**BIG.** A very common synonym is *hefty*, but more interest attaches to the idiomatic use of *thumping*, *whacking* and *whopping*, each generally combined adverbially with a standard adjective denoting size—e.g. ‘a *whacking* great melon.’ The age of these words is surprising: *thumping* dates from 1576, *whopping* (also spelt *wapping*, *whapping*, *wopping*) from 1625, and *whacking* from 1823. There are corresponding nouns, *thumper* (1680), *whacker* (1825) and *whopper* (1791), denoting any large object, but more especially a particularly big lie—e.g. ‘That’s a *whopper*’: curiously enough, this sense goes back in each case to the earliest recorded date. See LIE.

**biggy:** see CHRIST’S HOSPITAL.

**bile** (Bradfield, 1930+), to take a prior position in a queue by reason of seniority.

See also *bung*,<sup>2</sup> *clap*, *fudge*, *oil* [5] and *ram* [8]

**bilge:** see NONSENSE.

**Bilham** (Rugby): see MAN SERVANT.

**Bill:** at Eton, a list of boys due to interview the Headmaster, or who are excused Absence (=call-over): at Harrow, call-over for the whole school. These uses are in reality survivals from a time when *bill* had a much wider significance than it bears today.

**bim, bum**, the seat, posterior, from the fourteenth century onwards: hence as a verb=cane (see CANE). Christ’s Hospital (1905+) used *beam*—e.g. ‘I’ll hack your *beam*,’ probably a lengthening of *bim*.

**Bin**<sup>1</sup> (Rossall): see HEADMASTER.

**bin**<sup>2</sup> (Marlborough, 1980+), a place, seat, desk: *to rush a bin*=to keep a place.

**bindle** (Rossall, 1877+), ball.

**bing**: see **THROW**.

**binge**: see *gut*.

**hint** (St Bees, 1915+): see **ARMY SLANG, WOMAN**.

**BIRCH**: a bundle of birch, or sometimes willow, twigs bound to a handle, the traditional instrument of corporal punishment in England, now falling out of use. The victim of birching had to strip, and was either held down by his fellows over a *flogging horse* or *swishing block* (Eton) specially constructed for the purpose, or a bench or form (e.g. *scrubbing forms* at Winchester), or else was *taken up* or *horsed* upon the back of another boy in the old Roman fashion. These processes may be illustrated by quotation.

John Brinsley (who was a pioneer in education, and far ahead of his contemporaries in most ways) explains in his 'Ludus Literarius' (1612) how necessary it was to hold the victim down:

'To this end appoint three or four of your scholars, whom you know to be honest, and strong enough, or more if need be, to lay hand upon him together, to hold him fast, over some form, so that he cannot stir hand nor foot: or else if no other remedy will serve, to hold him to some post (which is far the safest and free from inconvenience) so as he cannot anyway hurt himself or others, be he never so peevish.'

The procedure in connection with a block is described in an anonymous volume of reminiscences published in 1831 with the title 'Eton':

'All necessary habiliments being removed, and kneeling on the block, while two boys (known as *holders down*) stood behind it holding my arms and clothes and grinning all the time, I awaited the fatal stroke.'

Blanch in his 'Bluecoat Boy' gives an account of a *birching* at Christ's Hospital in the middle of the last century. On the command 'Unstrip, sir. *Horse* him, monitors,' from the headmaster,

'four comrades, pressed into the hateful service, would accompany him (the victim) into a lobby: one would serve as *horse*, two of them would have a leg apiece to hold secure, and the fourth would have the more ignoble

task assigned to him of holding tight over the wretch's head the extremity of his garments so as to leave exposed the orthodox surface for birch-correction.'

Few slang expressions are used of birching as distinct from caning (see *CANE*), but the following may be noted:

**brush** (Christ's Hospital, 1898+), an appropriate meiosis: cf. *bum-brusher*, later *brusher*=school-master.

**swipe** (Harrow), but going out in favour of the euphemism *send up* (i.e. to the Headmaster) some thirty years ago (see *send up*)

**swish** (Eton. Charterhouse, at least 1874-1934: probably other schools)

**tight** (Christ's Hospital, 1898+), unconvincingly explained as tight+breeches.

*Swipe* and *swish* were and are also used of caning in many schools.

See also *bibler*, PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**bird**: see WOMAN.

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD**: see

*blouch* (*blub*)

*bot-pad*

*dosh basket*

*fain* (*fen*)

*groichung* (BULLY)

*herp* (*cad*)

*hoy* (*cad*, GREEK)

**Bite** (Christ's Hospital, Charterhouse): see WARNING CRIES.

**blab**: see *sneak*.

**black** (Rugby, c. 1850), nickname. one of the very few examples of exclusively Rugby slang to be derived from 'Tom Brown's Schooldays.'

**blackguard**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**Black Hole** (Shrewsbury): see PUNISHMENT (various) [2]

**blag** (Bootham, Rugby): see *cad*, MAN SERVANT.

**blah** (Rugby, 1926+), elsewhere commonly *blah-blah*, from *blasé*: applied to affected speech and behaviour.

**blasted**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**blazer**: originally university rather than school slang, since it was first applied to the coat of blazing scarlet worn by the members of the boat-club at St John's

College, Cambridge, but now used everywhere of any flannel jacket (even if black or navy blue) used or intended as sports wear. The 'Eton Glossary' (1923) strangely goes to the trouble of explaining the word as if it were unknown outside Eton.

**bleacher** (Tonbridge): see *cad*.

**bleed** (Tonbridge): see *blood*.

**blick** (Westminster, c. 1900), ball: possibly onomatopoeic of a hard ball in the first instance.

**blighter**: see *cad*.

**blinking**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**block**: see HEAD.

**blockhead**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**blog** (Rugby): see *cad*, MAN SERVANT: also as a verb, see *lick*.

**bloich** (Bishop's Stortford): see *blub*.

**blood, buck, swell**. These three words, all used in standard English of the same type of young man (though at different periods), are also synonymous in school slang, where they denote boys who are prominent among their fellows generally through athletic prowess. The use of the words often implies also that such boys are conscious, perhaps too conscious, of their prestige: see a scathing passage in Alec Waugh's 'Loom of Youth,' which depicts the ignorance, bumptiousness and vulgarity of the Sherborne *bloods* in Waugh's time, as he saw them.

*Blood* is perhaps the commonest of these words. *Swell* is favoured at Eton, though less so perhaps than in the past, and was once used at Rugby, but is said (1904+) to have been ousted by *buck*. The words are sometimes used almost as technicalities. Thus at Bradfield 1st XI colours are *Full Bloods* and 2nd XI colours are *Half Bloods* (by analogy with the university *Full Blue* and *Half Blue*), while Rugby has different kinds of *bucks*—e.g. *games bucks*, *corps bucks*, *music bucks*, and even *stinks bucks* (=experts at chemistry)

Other equivalents are:

**bleed** (Tonbridge, PSWB), simply a variant of *blood*.  
**doe** (Christ's Hospital, 1908 -), perhaps sarcastic as the opposite of *buck*.

**god** (Eton, PSWB, 1881; Lancing, 1938): *god-box* = House Captain's room (Lancing)  
**tweak** (Shrewsbury, date uncertain)

For words of similar, though not equivalent, meaning, see *heavy*, *nib*, *nut*. For the privileges of *bloods*, see PRIVILEGE-TABOO.

**bloomer**, a serious mistake, in some senses equivalent to *howler* (q.v.): *blooming*, a polite substitute for *bloody* (see DISAPPROVAL)

**blot** (Rossall): see *blub*.

**blotch** (Harrow, 1887), blotting-paper: in common use among small boys today.

**blow** (Winchester, WB, NB), blush. This application of the word is probably transferred from the blowing of flowers, especially roses, in poetical contexts—e.g. 'Th' enamour'd rose by kissing *blows*/Soft blushes on her cheek' (Habington, 1645), quoted by Wrench (WB). See *hunt*, *redder*, *toast*.

**blow-out**: see *gut*.

**blub**, an abbreviation of the now rather pedantic *blubber*, is probably the commonest school equivalent of *weep*. Hence *blub-baby* = *cry-baby*, one given to unnecessary weeping, which was current during the last century: for example, a character in 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' describes one of his fellows as a 'horrid young *blub-baby*.'

A few schools have their own words—e.g.:

**bloich** (Bishop's Stortford, now obs.)

**blot** (Rossall, 1930+)

**bubble** (Sherborne, 1915+): a mis-rendering of *blubber*.

**buzz** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB)

**juice** (Bootham, 1925): also = reprimand, since a reprimand produces juice or tears from the eyes: a lecture or *pi-jaw* was a *juice-meeting*.

**lob** (Winchester, NB), an abbreviation of the earlier *lobster*, current c. 1900, and supposedly from the Hampshire dialect *lowster*.

It is worth noting that all these words except *juice* seem to be onomatopœic.

**Bluebottle** (Christ's Hospital): see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**blug** (Bootham, Rugby): see *cad*, MAN SERVANT.

**boater** (Harrow): see HAT.

**bob**<sup>1</sup>: in the Eton terms, *dry-bob*, a boy who plays cricket, and *wet-bob*, a boy who rows.

**bob**<sup>2</sup>: see MONEY.

**bodge** (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), paper, in the primary sense—e.g. '*matha bodge*'; as also in the secondary sense of examination paper—e.g. 'That Latin *bodge* was difficult.' It is possible that, like *bumph* (q.v.), it originally meant toilet paper, since *bog*=lavatory.

**Bodger** (Rugby): see HEADMASTER.

**Bogey** (Warwick): see HEADMASTER.

**Bogle** (Rugby): see MAN SERVANT.

**bogs**: see LAVATORIES.

**boiled baby** (Colston's) see PUDDING.

**boiler**: see HAT.

**boko**, nose: synonyms are *conk*, *neb* (q.v.): see also *Boker* under NICKNAMES.

**bolly** (Marlborough, PSWB, still current), 1. pudding in general, 2. steam pudding. Thus the question, 'What's for *bolly*?' might provoke the somewhat mystifying answer, '*Bolly*.' The word is presumably from *bolster* (in which sense it was used at Brighton, 1920+), owing to the shape and appearance of certain steam puddings, but it is applied to other kinds of pudding also—e.g. Christmas pudding—as appears from the late C. L. F. Boughey's poem '*Bolly*.' As a nickname, *Bolly* is applied to fat persons.

See also PUDDING.

**bom** (Leys): see MAN SERVANT.

**bone**: see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**bonk** (Stonyhurst): see *cad*.

**bony**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, LATIN [1]

**boo** (Bromsgrove): see BREAD [1]

**boob** (Rugby), **booby**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**book**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester), class, form. This is a very old and characteristic Wykehamist idiom. It was current in the sixteenth century—e.g. in the Headmaster's *Vulgaria* (1510), 'I am Prepositor of my *boke*: *duco*

*classem,* and it is still current, being applied to three of the main divisions of the school, the Sixth, Fifth and Second. A boy who is in school is said to be *up to books*. The origin of the expression must probably be sought in the fact that the different classes (which originally sat in different rows, or on different forms) used different books suited to their attainments, one book to each class: hence a boy might be said to be 'in the second book' when engaged in studying the second book.

**book<sup>2</sup>** (Winchester), a school prize. Hence *to raise books* = to win a prize, and *to get books* = to gain the first place in anything, more especially to make top score at cricket or any other game.

**book<sup>3</sup>** (Westminster, c. 1870), to throw books at the cook, if he carried out his part of the famous pancake ceremony clumsily.

**boose** (Bradfield): see **CROWD**.

**boot**: see **KICK**.

**BOOTHAM.** In 1925 an attempt was made under the direction of Mr. G. C. Rowntree to get together an authoritative collection of Bootham slang, and a preliminary booklet containing some 130 expressions was printed. The attempt apparently went no further, but owing to the courtesy of an Old Boy it has been possible to make use of the booklet, from which most of the examples of Bootham slang in the present volume are taken (these are denoted by the date 1925).

Bootham is a comparatively new school, founded in 1828: it is also a Quaker school, having a quite different ethos from the average public school. These two circumstances seem to be responsible for the fact that its slang is unconventional and different. In general the Bootham idiom has a somewhat naive and youthful air, at times rather consciously facetious, and seemingly of the twentieth rather than the nineteenth century, though it must be supposed that some words at any rate are survivals from an earlier period. A typical Bootham sentence is the following: 'Just had a *juice-meeting* with

*My Lord* for *tuzhering* a *bug* ' (= 'I've just been reprimanded by the Headmaster for breaking an electric-light bulb') Many others of the words included here, of which a list follows, are, as will be seen, of this same elusive and rather indescribable type—a type not peculiar to Bootham, but so prevalent in the Bootham vocabulary as to be regarded as characteristic of that school.

See

<i>angel</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>juice</i> ( <i>blub</i> )
<i>bars</i> (BREAD [2])	<i>luscious</i> (APPROVAL)
<i>betty</i> (MAID, WOMAN)	<i>mellow</i> (APPROVAL)
<i>blag, blug</i> ( <i>cad</i> , MAN SERVANT)	<i>My Lord</i> (HEADMASTER)
<i>bounce</i> ( <i>cheek</i> )	<i>oaf</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>buck</i> ( <i>buck</i> [2])	<i>ovule</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>bug</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>picnic</i> (PUNISHMENT)
<i>bull</i> (DRINK)	<i>pink</i> ( <i>cop</i> )
<i>cramps</i>	<i>pipes</i>
<i>creek</i>	<i>playground</i> (PUDDING)
<i>croby</i> (BREAD [3])	<i>quiddle</i>
<i>deacon</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>rabble</i> ( <i>rag</i> )
<i>dick</i> ( <i>effort</i> )	<i>reeve</i> (PREFECT)
<i>dog</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sans</i>
<i>dribbletank</i> (DISAPPROVAL)	<i>Send, Send me</i> (EX- CLAMATIONS)
<i>drip, dripstack</i> (DIS- APPROVAL)	<i>serve</i> (IMPOSITION)
<i>effort</i>	<i>soap</i> ( <i>oil, sweat</i> )
<i>faff</i> ( <i>effort</i> )	<i>stivvy</i>
<i>famine</i>	<i>straw</i>
<i>fatherly</i>	<i>swab</i> ( <i>cad</i> )
<i>flop</i> (DRINK)	<i>swine</i> ( <i>gut</i> )
<i>forage</i>	<i>Switch off</i> ( <i>Shut up</i> )
<i>galley</i>	<i>tipple</i>
<i>greaser</i> ( <i>oil</i> )	<i>tuzher</i>
<i>hoik</i>	<i>victual</i>
<i>hot</i> (APPROVAL)	<i>willy</i> ( <i>effort</i> )
	<i>york</i>

**bored**: see **ANGRY**.

**bosh**<sup>1</sup>: see **NONSENSE**.

**bosh**<sup>2</sup>: see **boss**.

**Boss**<sup>1</sup>: see **HEADMASTER, MASTER**.

**boss.**<sup>2</sup> The word has a number of interconnected uses, which may be tabulated as follows:

- (1) **to boss**=to be short-sighted (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840·1909+)

**boss, bossier**=a short-sighted person.

**boss-eyed**=short-sighted, or alternatively squinting.

- (2) **to boss**=to miss one's aim (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840: 1887-1916)

a **boss shot**=a miss.

a **boss**=a blunder. *to make a boss* (Christ's Hospital, 1914+)

**to boss** an examination paper or question (Phillipotts, 'The Human Boy,' 1899)

- (3) **to boss**=to look at (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840: 1909+), probably an extension of (1)

The semantic development is doubtless in the order given, since a *boss-eyed* person would naturally make *boss shots*.

*Bosh* is an alternative spelling—e.g. 'Jolly well *boshed*' (Vachell, 'The Hill,' 1905), from the crowd when someone misses a kick at goal in Harrow football.

**bot-pad** (Bishop's Stortford, date uncertain), cushion. See *kish*.

**bottle** (Sherborne). More or less equivalent to *floor*—e.g. 'I'll get *bottled* in every paper,' 'I must do enough work to avoid getting *bottled*' Farmer records it as a Sherborne word in the PSWB, and it occurs also in Alec Waugh's 'Loom of Youth,' twenty years later. At Durham (PSWB) *to be bottled* implied 1. getting in a fix of any kind, 2. getting very hot—e.g. 'I got regularly *bottled* in that room,' 3. more specifically, being roasted before a fire by way of torture. It is not clear whether these different usages all involve extensions of the same original metaphor. Two notions seem to emerge: 1. of being bottled up, unable to escape or get further; 2. of being cooked, or *boiled* (another slang usage), like bottled fruit or other food.

See also *bowl, cropple, floor, plough, ship, skew, turn*.

boulee (Charterhouse). see GREEK.

bounce (Bootham) see *cheek*.

bounder: see *cad*.

bouse (Cheltenham): see MAN SERVANT.

bowl. The simple use of the word in connection with cricket has given rise to several slang or colloquial metaphors. Thus it was once possible to speak of *bowling over* an examination paper, an examiner, a lesson, or indeed any difficulty. the idiom is still occasionally heard. In this sense it is synonymous with *floor* and *gravel* (q.v.). From this arose a more limited Winchester usage, of a master refusing to accept a boy's work, in this case equivalent to certain senses of *bottle*, *cropple*, *floor*, *plough*, *ship*, *skew* and *turn* (q.v.).

box (Westminster). see *bag*.\*

BOY. It is characteristic that boys at school seldom refer to each other as boys. The commonest equivalent is *chap*, or perhaps *fellow*, as at Eton and Charterhouse. Charterhouse indeed feels strongly about *chap*: 'There were no *chaps* at Charterhouse,' writes a correspondent who entered the school in 1874, and another who entered in 1915 says, 'The word *chap* is never used and is considered most inferior. To the unprejudiced mind the distinction between *fellow* and *chap* is a little difficult to follow. At Winchester, Rugby, Sherborne, and it may be other schools, all boys, of whatever age, are euphemistically known as *men* elsewhere this usage is confined to games. The North Country day schools remain faithful to their native *lad*, which, however, provokes much ridicule if ever it is heard in a Southern school.

Small boys are commonly called *kids*, generally with a touch of scorn, a very old usage dating from 1599. At Colston's, however (1887), *kid* was used to denote any boy, with no derogatory sense, so that the smallest junior might speak with impunity of Sixth Form *kids*. Synonyms for *kid* are *brat*, *squirt* (Christ's Hospital 1905+), *scrub* (Christ's Hospital, 1876+. see *scrub* for a full discussion of its implications), *scug* (q.v.: Eton), *pint* (Rossall, 1877+),

and *tick* (Rugby, 1926+, Oundle, 1930+), all calculated to make a small boy feel even smaller.

A generic term for boy formerly in use at Harrow (PSWB, obs.) was *joseph*—e.g. *beetle joseph*=entomologist, *music joseph*=a boy who studied music.

For further relevant information see DAY BOY, NEW BOY: also under *fag*<sup>1</sup> for *boy*=*fag*.

**BRADFIELD:** see

<i>bile</i>	<i>head usher</i> (HEADMASTER)
<i>blood</i>	<i>hooter</i> (BREAD [8])
<i>boose</i> (CROWD)	<i>loop</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>cheese</i>	<i>ruz</i> (KICK)
<i>grubs</i> ( <i>grub</i> )	<i>toise</i> ( <i>toys</i> )

**BRADFORD:** see *tig* (*tuck*)

**brass**<sup>1</sup>: see MONEY.

**brass**<sup>2</sup>: see *cheek*.

**brasser** (Christ's Hospital): see BULLY.

**brat**: see BOY, NEW BOY, people.

**BREAD.** As in the case of other school food, there is a marked satirical tone about the language used in referring to school bread in its different aspects. Words may be roughly grouped as follows:

(1) Bread as a whole:

**boo** (Bromsgrove, 1852+, 1884+): this has been not very convincingly explained as short for *bamboo*, to which the bread in question was said to bear a marked resemblance.

**chuck** (Sutton Valence, for at least fifty years): perhaps akin to *chock*, *chunk*.

**crug** (Christ's Hospital): *q.v.*

**scanty** (Rossall, 1877+). used originally of the bread allowance at meals, owing to its quantity, later (1913+) of a small loaf supplied for Sunday tea in studies.

**sines** (Winchester, WB): used collectively of bread: a *sines* was also a small loaf.

**toke**: a word of some age and widely used: its origin is obscure, but has been thought to involve a pun, since *toke* (Winchester *thoke*, *q.v.*) = idle, *loaf*.

**touze** (King's, Canterbury), with a singular *tow* formed by treating *touze* as plural: stated to be Scots.

(2) Pieces of bread:

**bars** (Bootham, 1925)

**bricks** (Forest, 1920+; Hereford)

**mouldies** (Denstone, 1914+)

(3) Crust:

**croby** (Bootham, 1925): later bread-and-butter.

**doughback** (Colston's, 1887)

**hooter** (Bradfield, 1930+): origin obscure.

(4) Bread-and-butter:

**brup** (Eastbourne, 1902+): perhaps a port-manteau word.

**scrape** (Brighton, 1920+ and elsewhere)

**scratch** (Warwick, 1930+)

Between them these words cover most of the shortcomings of school bread.

See also **CAKE**.

**brew**.<sup>1</sup> One who indulges in a private meal of his own finding is said in many schools to *brew*, or if he entertains his friends, to *give a brew*: a *tuck-box* may even be a *brew-box* (Marlborough, 1930+). In origin the word is connected with the brewing of drink, more especially perhaps tea, in which connection it seems to have been used at Marlborough before it became general elsewhere.

See also *find*, *grub*, *gut*, *sink*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**brew**<sup>2</sup> (Harrow, 1887), to damage, knock about: perhaps a corruption of *bruise*.

**brick**<sup>1</sup>: see **APPROVAL**.

**brick**<sup>2</sup> (Charterhouse): see **CROWD**.

**bricks** (Forest): see **BREAD** [2]

**bricky** (Allhallows, Dulwich): see *cad*.

**BRIGHTON COLLEGE**: see

*bolly*

*nab* (*cop*)

*scuff*

*tick* (**WARNING CRIES**)

**bro:** see *people*.

**broady:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**brock, brockster** (Winchester): see BULLY.

**BROMSGROVE:** see

*boo* (BREAD [1])

*dicker* (*dicks*)

*dicks*

*jout* (PREFECT)

*nailer* (*cad*)

**brown:** see MONEY.

**browse** (Marlborough, PSWB), 1. as a noun = a pleasant or easy time, a treat—e.g. 'French is a *browse*,' *morning browse* = leave off early school; 2. as an adjective, more frequently *browsy* = pleasant, enjoyable—e.g. 'a *browsy* morning,' 'an awfully *browsy* time'; 3. as a verb, *to browse on* = to enjoy—e.g. 'I *browse on* science hour.' The use is an extension of the ordinary sense of *browse* = eat lazily.

**brozier** (Eton, obs. c. 1900), a verb denoting the practice of eating, pocketing, or otherwise disposing of everything on the table and constantly asking for more, as a protest against the quality or quantity of food supplied. *Brozieren a dame* is thus equivalent to eating him or her out of house and home. According to the PSWB *brozier* is Cheshire dialect for bankrupt, completely cleared out, which would indeed be the state of a dame's larder after a *brozieren*.

**brum** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. penniless—e.g. 'I'm dead *brum*,' 2. stingy—e.g. 'Come, don't be *brum*.' The opposite in both senses is *bulky* (q.v.). Wrench marks the word as unexplained, but refers to a similar Kentish dialect word *brumpt* = bankrupt.

**brup** (Eastbourne): see BREAD [4]

**brush** (Christ's Hospital): see BIRCH, PUNISHMENT (various) [1]. For the noun *brush*, also *brusher* (Cheltenham), see MASTER.

**bubble** (Sherborne): see *blub*.

**buck.** A word of many meanings, all probably in some way interconnected, though their relationships are not always obvious. They are given below in some

attempt at a semantic order of development from the simple original sense of 'male goat or deer.'

- (1) **buck** (Rugby, 1904+) = *swell, blood (q.v.)*: an adaptation or survival of the common eighteenth century use of the word to denote a fashionable young man.
- (2) **buck** (Bootham, 1925) = conceit, insolence, *cheek (q.v.)*
- (3) **buck** (Winchester, WB, obs. 1900) = handsome.
- (4) **buck** (Felsted, PSWB), equivalent to fine, jolly—e.g. 'He's a *buck* lot of use.'
- (5) **buck** (Bedford, c. 1880-1910) = board-school boy, hooligan, possibly because the original *bucks* sometimes behaved in the streets like hooligans: see *cad*.
- (6) **buck** (Bushey, 1907+) = an outsider, *cad* in the moral sense: a development of (5): see *cad*.
- (7) **to buck up** (Winchester, WB, but now common) = to cheer up, since *bucks* were by nature cheerful.
- (8) **to buck down** (Winchester, WB) = to be miserable: by analogy from (7)
- (9) **bucksome** or **buxom** (Winchester, WB, recent in 1900) = cheerful.
- (10) **bucked** = pleased—e.g. 'I am *bucked*': in general use.
- (11) **to buck up** = to hurry, or, in a game, to play hard: very common, especially as a command: also as a transitive verb—e.g. 'I'll go and *buck* them *up*' a development of (7)
- (12) **to be bucked** (Uppingham, PSWB) = to be tired: possibly the result of (11)
- (13) **bucked** (Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, 1924+) = extremely annoyed: perhaps from (12), just as *bored* is sometimes used = annoyed.

**buckhorse** (Westminster): see **HIT**.

**budge**, like *shift*, a common synonym for move: also = **PROMOTION (q.v.)**

**bug**,<sup>1</sup> **new bug**: see **NEW BOY**.

**bug**,<sup>2</sup> (Bootham, 1925), electric-light bulb: possibly a corruption of *bulb*.

**Buggins** (Rugby): see MAN SERVANT.

**bug-wash** (Felsted, 1930+), hair-oil: certainly not a Felsted coinage.

**bulky** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. rich, 2. generous—e.g. *a bulky pax*=a rich and generous friend. The opposite is *brum* (q.v.)

**bull**<sup>1</sup> (Bootham): see DRINK.

**bull**<sup>2</sup>: see MONEY.

**BULLY.** Though the bully was at one time a conspicuous character in every school, and is the villain of the piece in most school stories, he has few slang appellations. The actual word *bully*, which is no longer slang, was and is for the most part used. Three synonyms, however, may be noted. *brasser* (Christ's Hospital, 1877+); *brockster* (Winchester, WB), with a verb *to brock* and an abstract noun *brock*=injustice, probably from *brock*=badger (rather than as suggested in the WB from an obscure Middle English verb *brokken*); and *plucky* (Malvern, 1902+)

There have been many names for particular forms of bullying, of which the following list is illustrative:

**bottling** (Durham, PSWB): roasting a boy in front of the fire (see 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' for a description)

**chancery**: *to put* a boy *in chancery* was equivalent to *screwing* or *wringing* his neck, either of which idioms would be preferred today.

**greasing** (Winchester, PSWB, c. 1840): rubbing a small boy's head with the knuckles.

**groiching** (Bishop's Stortford, date uncertain): depriving small boys of a place by the fire.

**launching** (c. 1815): turning a boy's bed upside down over him when asleep, or more generally dragging him out of bed, clothes and all: see *ship*.

**Modes and Persians** (Winchester, PSWB): applied to the practice of jumping on a boy in bed.

**poop** (Tonbridge, 1897+): to give a boy a *poop* meant to strike him on the leg with the knee, at the same time twisting his arm.

**shipping**: synonymous with *launching*: see *ship*, also *rag*.

**tin gloves** (Winchester, c. 1840): a peculiarly cruel form of torture, of which an account is given in Mansfield's 'School Life at Winchester' (1866). The bully in this case would get hold of a small boy (referred to in the extract as Green), and after asking him if he possessed a pair of *tin gloves* and receiving the inevitable reply, would proceed as follows:

'Taking a half consumed stick from the fire he would draw the red-hot end down the back of Green's hand between each of the knuckles to the wrist, and having produced three satisfactory lines of blisters would then make two or three transverse lines across. A scientifically fitted pair of gloves of this description was generally, if not pleasant wear, of great durability.'

For other forms of violence applied by the stronger and more brutal to the weak and defenceless, see under HIT and KICK. Something to the point will also be found under *rag*, which in one of its senses implies a kind of psychological bullying, more refined but sometimes just as cruel as the old sadistic variety.

**bully**. Now limited to certain technical senses in connection with various games (to be noted presently), the word was once a general expression denoting a football mêlée: the earliest OED quotation is for 1865 ('the fierce football *bully*'). It apparently still continued in use in this sense in Association football as late as 1911, when it was defined in the 'Encyclopædia of Sport' as 'any confused play in which several men are very close together, and keep kicking the ball into one another.'

The formalization of the mêlée (as, for example, into the *scrum* of Rugby football) caused *bully* to develop into a technicality in various specific senses: 1. in the Eton Field and Wall Games, a kind of *scrum*, a stereotyped little formation of four players in the Field Game and five in the Wall Game; 2. in Association football (c. 1911), the procedure when the referee throws up the ball to

restart the game, which is thus a development of the *scrum*; 3. in modern hockey, where the *bully* has been reduced to two players, who *bully off* at the beginning of the game; 4. in Rossall hockey, where the *bully* consists of eight players standing shoulder to shoulder, the nearest equivalent to a *scrum* possible in such a game.

See also *gutter*,<sup>1</sup> *grovel*, *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *rouge*, *squash*<sup>2</sup>: and for a further Rossall sense under *CROWD*.

**bum**: see *bim*, *CANE*.

**bum-brusher**: see *MASTER*.

**bum-freezers**, **bum-starvers**: used aptly and forcefully of Eton jackets.

**bumble**<sup>1</sup> (Eastbourne). see *MAN SERVANT*.

**bumble**<sup>2</sup> (Eton, c. 1920), the name applied to small beer bottled with sugar and raisins to make it palatable.

**bumph**: originally used of toilet-paper only, but now everywhere of any kind of paper: hence *bumph-hunt* (Wellington, PSWB) = paper-chase. Sometimes a *bumph* = a sheet of paper, also a newspaper. Tonbridge (1921+) used *short bumph* = quarto and *long bumph* = foolscap paper. An older Tonbridge form (1897+) was *bimph*. At Charterhouse (1920+) *bumph* was synonymous with *crib*<sup>1</sup> (q.v.)

See also *bodge*.

**bumptious** (St Bees): see *cheek*.

**buncle** (Cheltenham): see *DORMITORY*.

**bung**<sup>1</sup>: see *THROW*.

**bung**<sup>2</sup> (Colston's, 1887), to push in and take another's place: probably from one of its general slang senses, cheat, swindle.

See also *bile*, *clap*, *fudge*, *oil* [5], *ram* [3].

**bungy**, **gunger** (Colston's, 1884+), **fungus** (Christ's Hospital, 1907+), **fungi** (Christ's Hospital, 1914+), **indiarubber**. It is curious that these various distortions of the word *rubber*, belonging to different schools and different periods, should have so much in common.

**bunk**, a verb (1) intransitive, to run away—e.g. 'He *bunked off* after school' (also as a noun in one idiom, *to do a bunk*): see *RUN* for synonyms.

(2) transitive, to expel. According to Farmer the latter was a Wellington usage; but it has long been very general in all types of school. The only common equivalent, not confined to schools, is *sack*, but Winchester has *firk* (*q.v.*)

**bunker** (Stonyhurst): see *cad*.

**bunky**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**burr** (Marlborough): see *mill*.

**burry** (Eton), the bureau which every boy has in his room: one of the few abbreviations recognized by the 'Eton Glossary.'

**BUSHEY, ROYAL MASONIC SCHOOL**: see

*buck* (*buck* [6], *cad*)                      *dink* (ANGRY)

*Clicks* (EXCLAMATIONS)              *pip*

**busk** (Marlborough): see CROWD.

**bust** (Winchester): a player who catches the ball in Winchester football is allowed to take a kick, or *bust*, after running not more than three steps; cf. *yards* (*q.v.*) in Harrow football.

See also *canvas*, *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *plant*, *tag*,<sup>1</sup> *worms*.

**butcher about** (Wellington, PSWB), 1. to make a noise, 2. to humbug.

**butty** (Framlingham): see *cad*.

**buzz** (Christ's Hospital): see *blub*.

**buzz off**: see RUN.

**cab**: see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**cad**. The ancient enmity between town and school has in many cases given a snobbishly offensive tone to the names which the members of the school apply to the townspeople; so much so, that these often bear a double meaning. 1. a townsman, 2. anyone with bad manners, uncouth speech, or deceitful character. This is a regrettable fact, but it is a fact and must be duly recorded. One of the oldest and best examples of this type of word is *cad*. In general colloquial usage today, *cad*, with its adjective *caddish*, is, of course, a highly insulting expression. It was originally, however, a quite harmless abbreviation of *caddie*, which in the eighteenth century

meant any man or boy loitering about in the hope of chance employment, not necessarily in connection with golf. In schools it was once widely used in this colourless sense of men and boys from the town or village, and still survives—e.g. at Eton, where *street cad* is even now occasionally heard, and possibly at other schools. The offensive usage apparently began about a century ago.

Now follows a group of words which, in varying degrees, carry this double sense:

**blag, blug** (Bootham, 1925–), **blog** (Rugby, 1926+) **buck** (Bedford, c. 1910); either a board-school boy or a hooligan, at Bushey (1907+), a *cad* in the moral sense.

**bonk** (Stonyhurst, 1934+), with an earlier form *bunker* (PSWB)

**chaw** (Harrow, 1887. and many other schools during the nineteenth century) adj. *chawish*: supposedly an abbreviation of *chawbacon* (=country bumpkin); thus *to chaw*=to play roughly at football, and in general slang, of rough handling—e.g. 'He got *chawed* up'

**gutter** (Bedales, 1918+). a mildly abusive abbreviation of *gutter-snipe*.

**lout** (Rugby). it occurs in 'Tom Brown's School-days,' and is still current

**nip** (Malvern, 1902+, etc.). exactly synonymous with *cad*, so that a boot-boy was a *boot-nip*, while at the same time 'You *nip*' carried great vituperative force.

**oik, hoik**: very widely used and of some age: at Cheltenham (1897) it meant simply a working-man, but at Christ's Hospital (1885) it implied someone who spoke Cockney, and at Bootham (1925) someone who spoke with a Yorkshire accent. Bootham also had *oikman* and the very abusive *oikbrat*, as well as a verb *oik* or *hoik*, to spit, which is in use elsewhere, and may be an onomatopœic formation preceding the noun.

**outer**: innocuous at Colston's (1887), where it meant a street-boy, but at Durham (PSWB) carrying the usual double sense.

**snagger** (Clifton, 1921+): probably a corruption of *St Agnes*, the name of the school mission, sometimes called *Snagger Mission*.

**snob**: so generally used a century ago: also = day boy (*q.v.*): see *Snob cricket*.

The following expressions are harmless in themselves, though they may sometimes carry an offensive meaning by implication:

**bricky** (Allhallows, 1918+; Dulwich, 1980+): supposedly from the town-boy's habit of throwing *bricks* (=stones). also *bricky whistle* = a shrill whistle between the fingers, and *bricky cap*, with *Bricky* as a nickname for a master who always wore such a cap.

**butty** (Framlingham, 1899+): said to be Suffolk dialect.

**cadger** (St Bees, 1915+, and elsewhere). also *cadger cap* see *cadger* for its origin and other uses.

**geordie** (Durham, 1921+) a common Durham and Northumberland name for a miner.

**herp** (Bishop's Stortford): origin obscure.

**hoy** (Bishop's Stortford): from Greek οἱ πολλοί (see GREEK)

**nailer** (Bromsgrove, 1916+, in use for many years): doubtless derived from a local industry.

**oiler** (Cheltenham, 1897+): see *oil* [2]

**pard, perd** (Kingswood): also *perd cap*: perhaps the American *pard* (=partner), rather than a reference to Shakespeare's soldier, 'Full of strange oaths and bearded like the *pard*.'

**pick-up** (Allhallows, 1918+): this is said to have originated with one particular lame boy, who *picked up* his leg as he walked, though it has a suspicious resemblance to the Winchester *pitch-up* = 1. a boy's family, 2. any crowd.

**rorker, rorke**, perhaps *rawk* (Tonbridge, 1886+): possibly onomatopœic.

**rowsterer** (Derby, PSWB)

**roy** (Christ's Hospital, 1886+)

**sci** (Westminster): see *sci* under LATIN [8] for a full discussion.

**townee, townier**.

The group of words considered in this article is one of the largest in the whole body of school slang, a fact of some social significance. It would be of interest to set beside them for comparison the names applied to public school boys by the inhabitants of the neighbouring town or village—e.g. *grammar lads* (St Bees), *varsity tits* (Durham University)

Synonyms for *cad* in its secondary sense are many of them common outside as well as inside schools, as, for example, *beast*, *blighter*, *rotter*, *swine* and *tick* (the last two on every page of Alec Waugh's Sherborne novel, 'The Loom of Youth,' generally qualified by *filthy* or *dirty*): perhaps also *bounder*. At the same time it should be observed that most of these words can be used with only the slightest implication of criticism, especially among those who use them constantly, so that *blighter* comes to mean much the same as *chap*, and the others can be applied almost affectionately to a close friend. This resembles the way in which *bloody* in some circles has become so neutralized that at times it is little more than an extension of the definite or indefinite article.

A few words belonging to this group are peculiar to individual schools—e.g. *bleacher* (Tonbridge, 1885), an objectionable boy; *loather* (Rugby, 1926+); *scaff* (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), a mean, selfish person; *snoke*, as verb as well as noun (Durham, PSWB), possibly a variant of *sneak* (q.v.); and *swab* (Bootham, 1925)

**cadge**, beg, sponge, especially of boys trying to beg food, etc., from a companion who has just received a parcel from home or otherwise come into possession of a quantity of good things. In such cases they are said to *cadge round*. The word is several centuries old in English colloquial usage.

See *oil*, *suck*.

**cadger**, the noun associated with the above verb has two senses: 1. someone who *cadges*, 2. a working man, a townsman (see *cad*). Originally in the fifteenth century a *cadger* was an itinerant dealer or pedlar, and later a beggar: the transition from this to the school slang usage (2) is obvious.

**Cæsar's bricks** (Framlingham): see PUDDING.

**caggy-handed** (Tettenhall, 1890+), **left-handed** = *scrummy-handed* (Colston's, 1887)

**CAKE.** In the matter of cake (as also PUDDING, *q.v.*) school slang has sometimes shown a pretty wit, not untinged with satire. Thus currant cake may be known as *shouting cake* (Stonyhurst, 1930+) or *bellering cake*, because the currants are so far apart that they have to shout or bellow to communicate with one another, or to make their presence felt. At Rugby (1926+), Lancing (1938) and elsewhere, a chocolate bun is an *Othello*. Charterhouse for many generations had a cake called *he*, which is said to have originated in the words of the song 'Little Billee,' where the sailors 'ate he,' that is Little Billee hence *young he* (=small cake) and *fish he* (=fish-cake). (It only required a slight effort of the imagination after that to label a pudding *she*.) The Leys (PSWB, c. 1900) used *kill-me-quick* of one tuck-shop cake, while two others were called more prettily *lamb's tails* and *piccaninnies*. Lancing had a cake called *outside left*, this being its usual position on the tuck-shop shelf. Any cake or biscuits containing currants may be on occasion *squashed flies*. Many other such names doubtless exist, but the examples given illustrate very well that particular type of schoolboy humour which is applied above all to food. See also BREAD.

**cake** (Christ's Hospital): see CANE.

**caker** (Leys, PSWB), bicycle: Farmer suggests *bone-shaker*, *shaker*, *caker*.

**calk**: see THROW.

**calx** (Eton). see LATIN [3]

**CANE.** This, the most general of all punishments, has significantly inspired more slang than any other single feature of school life. Among the following words euphemism will be noticed occasionally, but the underlying feeling is generally a humorous and unresentful acceptance of the situation.

**beat**: a jocular euphemism, now becoming very common, especially among masters.

**beat off** (Eton, in College, c. 1920): see *work off*.

**biff** (Rossall, 1930+): commoner in a general sense = hit.

**bim** (Tonbridge, 1897+), **bum**: **bim-stick**=a cane (Tonbridge, PSWB).

**cake** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), also as a noun=a stroke with the cane: it is an ironical reference to what you get when you hold out your hand.

**cock up** (Charterhouse, 1874-1924; St Bees, 1915+, etc.): according to a Charterhouse correspondent (1874+) 'the boy was told to *cock up*, when he assumed a position in which his seat was the most prominent feature of his person'; but the original sense was forgotten, and because a boy *cocked up* before being caned, *cock up* came to be synonymous with cane.

**coll pre'd, to be** (Cheltenham, 1928), to be caned by a prefect: see *postored*.

**common-roomed, to be** (Lancing, 1938), to be caned by a prefect.

**cosh** (Colston's, 1887; Warwick, 1930+), verb and noun; a cant word for a bludgeon.

**cut into** (Winchester, WB, NB, obs.): to chastise across the back with an ash-plant.

**flish, fliss** (Hereford): this originally denoted chastisement with a piece of lead bound with cord and swung at the end of a rope, but is still in use as equivalent to *cane*. The word is a very old one, which occurs in Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur' (1400) in the sense of *slash*.

**flog**: once the official word and common on the lips of headmasters, but now carrying such unpleasant associations that it is certainly never used in schools.

**have over** (Rugby, 1911+): cf. *cock up*.

**lam** (Forest, 1920+; Bushey, 1907+), **lamp** (Broms-grove, 1884+, 1916+; Tettenhall, 1890+)

**lick** (Malvern, 1902+): see *lick* for other uses and synonyms.

**pole** (Marlborough, 1930+)

**postored, to be** (Shrewsbury, 1938), to be caned by a praepostor see *coll pre'd, common-roomed*.

**scourge** (Winchester, PSWB, obs.)

**shots** (St Bees, 1915+), a caning—e.g. 'I've just had *shots*.'

**simon** (King Edward's, Birmingham, PSWB, obs.), noun only. a humorous coinage from Acts ix. 43, 'one Simon a tanner.'

**snitch** (Malvern, 1902+): originally of a blow on the nose or *snitch*<sup>1</sup> (*q.v.*)

**stizzle** (Tonbridge, 1882+), also=hurt: origin obscure.

**swipe**: see also under BIRCH.

**swish**: see also under BIRCH.

**tan**: several centuries old.

**tank** (King Edward's, Birmingham, PSWB): said to be Warwickshire dialect: cf. *tonk*.

**taps** (Stonyhurst, PSWB), a caning. cf. *shots*.

**tolly** (Dulwich, 1881+); conceivably from the Latin command *Tolle*='Lift up (your hand),' addressed to the victim, and if so an old word: this is confirmed by the fact that at Stonyhurst (PSWB) a flat instrument used for striking the hand was called a *tolly*.

**tonk** (Uppingham, 1930+): originally and more generally used of hitting a ball at cricket: cf. *tank*.

**tund** (Winchester), from Latin *tundo*=beat, used originally of a thrashing administered across the back by prefects with a ground-ash, now of an ordinary caning

**turn up** (Marlborough, PSWB); cf. *cock up, have over*.

**twank** (Durham, PSWB)

**whop** (Harrow, 1906+): so used from the fourteenth century.

**work off** (Eton, in College): superseded by *beat off* (*q.v.*)

**yark** (Durham, PSWB): said to be North Country dialect.

No distinction is here made between caning administered to the hand and caning applied to the seat. Some words were doubtless originally used of the first method (e.g. *tolly*), but since the second is now predominant, all surviving words denote this.

It may be added that an effective caning was referred to at Rugby (1911+) and Durham (PSWB) as *sappy*—i.e. juicy.

See also BIRCH, PUNISHMENT.

**canvas** (Winchester), netting eight feet high bounding the field of play in Winchester football three feet outside the ropes; so called because canvas was formerly used.

See also *bust*, *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *plant*, *tag*,<sup>1</sup> *worms*.

**cap**, to salute by raising the cap: in the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1803)

**capital**: see APPROVAL.

**card** (Colston's, 1887), a clever boy; probably because clever boys are sometimes eccentrics, queer fish, in which sense *card* is more generally used.

For synonyms see *dab*, *jig*, *nark*.

**cash**: see MONEY.

**cat**, vomit. It occurs in the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1803) as Cambridge slang now in common use. Synonyms are *puke*, *sick* and *spew*, all popular among boys, but none confined to boys.

**cat's-eyes-in-phlegm**: see PUDDING.

**caulk**: see THROW.

**cave, cavy**: see LATIN [1], MASTER, WARNING CRIES.

**chaff**<sup>1</sup> (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840): 1. a small article or plaything—e.g. 'a pocket *chaff*,' 'pocket-knives, combs, precious marbles, tops and all the other numerous non-descript articles which go to make up the *chaffs* of a Blue' (an article in 'The Blue,' August, 1874); 2. as a verb, to exchange—e.g. '*Chaff* me your knife.' It is clearly identical with the originally Anglo-Saxon *chaffer*=trade, barter, etc.

**chaff**<sup>2</sup> (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840): 1. an exclamation of pleasure—e.g. '*Chaff* for you,' the opposite being *vee* (see under CHRIST'S HOSPITAL); 2. an adjective=pleasant or

pleased; also in the form *chaffy*—e.g. 'a *chaffy* book,' 'I am *chaffy*.' The word continued in use till just before the last war. It is probably connected with the dialect *chuff* or *chough*=pleased, self-satisfied—e.g. 'You do look *chuff*.'

**chancery, to put in chancery** : see BULLY.

**chap** : see BOY.

**CHARTERHOUSE.** The slang vocabulary of Charterhouse is of the characteristic public school type. It has, however, a few words—e.g. *boulee*, *hash*, *he*, *post te*, *i'other'un*—which are of particular philological or other interest; details of these and of other words, as indicated, will be found below. Mention should also be made of an unusual method of abbreviation with vowel termination, which Charterhouse shares with Winchester—e.g. *degra* (=degradation): see under ABBREVIATION for details. Two other abbreviations in a class by themselves are *C'house* (=Charterhouse: not to be used to or by strangers) and *Godge* (=Godalming)

The subject of Carthusian slang is discussed in A. H. Tod's 'Charterhouse' (1900)

See

*banco*  
*barge* (CROWD)  
*basonite* (*fag*<sup>1</sup>)  
*bite* (WARNING CRIES)  
*blood*  
*boulee* (GREEK)  
*brick* (CROWD)  
*bumph* (*crib*<sup>1</sup>)  
*cock up* (CANE)  
*cube* (DORMITORY)  
*cuts*  
*dogger*  
*festive* (*cheek*)  
*fug-shop* (*fug*)  
*gownboy cricket*  
*hang out* (*swank*)  
*hash* (*swat*)

*he* (CAKE)  
*Headman* (HEADMASTER)  
*heifer* (MAID)  
*Ihad* (IMPOSITION)  
*mob up* (CROWD)  
*post te*  
*precies* (*preces*)  
*prvee* (*boulee*, under GREEK)  
*she* (CAKE)  
*squash*<sup>2</sup>  
*sticking*  
*stodge*<sup>1</sup>  
*stodger* (*stodge*<sup>1</sup>)  
*swinger* (HIT)  
*tax*  
*tonkabout*  
*tosh*<sup>2</sup>  
*i'other'un*

**chase** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840) to play truant, run away from school.

**chaw** (Harrow, etc.): for the noun, see *cad*: for the verb, see *luck*.

**Checks**: see *Chucks* under *Bags*.

**cheek**, adj. *cheeky*: impudence, more especially of a junior towards his elders and betters. Though this is the most widely used word, there are many synonyms and near-synonyms, and quite a number of these are similarly anatomical in origin. Thus *face*, *neck* (adj. *necky*) and *lip*, all common in schools, are to some extent interchangeable—e.g. 'You've got a *face*,' 'He's got plenty of *neck*,' 'None of your *lip*,' in each of which *cheek* might be substituted. According to Farmer, *jaw*, *mouth*, *chin*, and even at one time *brow* (1642), were commonly used in the same sense. Two notions would seem to be involved, 1. of insolent speech (*lip*, *jaw*, *mouth*, *chin*), 2. of insolent facial expression (*face*, *brow* and perhaps *neck*)

The following are other school synonyms, of various and sometimes untraceable origin

**bounce**: (Bootham, 1925)

**brass**: (Cheltenham, 1928+, and elsewhere:) adj. *brassy*: cf. *brazen*.

**buck** (Bootham, 1925) see *buck* for other senses.

**cock** (Oundle, 1930+): adj. *cocky*, *cozy*: see *cock* for fuller discussion.

**guff** (Oundle, 1930+), adj. *guffy*.

**ike** (Eastbourne, 1902+)

**jank** (Oundle, 1930+), adj. *janky*.

**nip** (Forest, 1920+), probably a corruption of *lip*.

**sass** (Uppingham, 1913+)

Adjectives synonymous with *cheeky* are:

**bumptious** (St Bees, 1915+): a slight extension of the conventional meaning of the word.

**festive** (Charterhouse, at least 1874-1919): according to a correspondent it was applied in the 70's to 'a boy in his first quarter who resented being questioned, or was not sufficiently humble.'

**spre** (Winchester, WB, NB): for an earlier sense see under **PRIVILEGE-TABOO**.

It may be noted that some of the words applied to NEW BOYS (*q.v.*) such as *brat*, *squit*, *tick*, may be often used to include the implication of *cheekiness*. Shrewsbury (1938) has a special word, *twirp* or *twirt*, to denote a *cheeky* small boy: with its suggestions of *squirt*, *chirpy* and similar words, it is a good example of sound accommodated to sense.

An interesting early use of *cheek* recorded from Westminster c. 1850 (Markham, 'Recollections of a Town Boy at Westminster, 1849-55,' 1903) applies the word to breaches of the unwritten law—e.g. smoking, wearing a hat in school, walking along a forbidden side of the road. A fuller discussion of this question will be found under PRIVILEGE-TABOO.

See also *swank*.

**Cheerio, Cheero:** see GOOD-BYE.

**cheese.** Five distinct school slang uses of this somewhat puzzling word are recorded:

- (1) **Cheese it**=Stop it: first recorded 1811.
- (2) In the common idiom *Hard cheese*, *Stuff cheese*=Hard luck.
- (3) As a verb equivalent to *swot* (Bradfield, 1918+)—e.g. 'Don't *cheese*.'
- (4) As a verb, to smile or grin (Oundle, 1920+)
- (5) As a verb, to stride out or hurry (Lancing, 1938)

It seems almost impossible to connect the five, if indeed they are to be connected. But the Hindustani *chiz*, thing, appears to be the source of (2). If so, it is not the only Hindustani word which has contributed to school slang. see *bunt*, *dekko*. It may even be that (3) can be so explained somewhat as follows. During the nineteenth century the phrase 'It's quite the *cheese*' (i.e. the thing) became popular. Hence *the cheese* came to denote anything particularly good, and when applied to a person meant an expert, an adept (as also a dandy—e.g. *a howling cheese*). From this might be derived the school slang verbal use in connection with showing undue skill, appearing too good at one's work; in a word, *swotting*. If this is so, (4) may imply grinning in a superior manner,

showing off in that way. But (1) is difficult to account for unless perhaps it was first addressed to someone showing off, and (5) remains quite intractable

**CHELTENHAM:** see

<i>beano</i> (COMMUNION)	<i>oiler</i> (oil [2])
<i>bouse</i> (MAN SERVANT)	<i>orderly</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )
<i>brusher</i> (MASTER)	<i>plate</i> (MONEY)
<i>buncle</i> (DORMITORY)	<i>pollor</i> (GREEK)
<i>colleger</i> (HAT)	<i>Pot</i> (HEADMASTER)
<i>coll pre'd</i> (CANE)	<i>pot-funk</i> ( <i>funk</i> )
<i>driver</i> (MASTER)	<i>side</i> (IMPOSITION)
<i>groise</i> (oil)	<i>snitch</i> ( <i>bag</i> <sup>2</sup> )
<i>groute</i> ( <i>swat</i> )	<i>squash</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>jerry</i>	<i>sweat</i> ( <i>swat</i> )
<i>jew</i> ( <i>crib</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>titch</i> (WARNING CRIES)

**chessers:** see *conquers*.

**Chief** (Sherborne; King's, Canterbury): see HEAD-MASTER.

**chighky:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**chimney pot:** see HAT.

**chink:** see MONEY.

**chinner** (Winchester, WB, obs.), a grin.

**chip in:** see *dub in*.

**chisel, chiz:** see *crib*,<sup>1</sup> *jew*.

**chizzy wag:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**chops** (King's, Canterbury, date uncertain), cheeks: apparently a survival or resuscitation of a good old English word. *Smack-chop* = a smack in the face.

**O'house:** see CHARTERHOUSE, also under NICKNAMES (SCHOOL).

**chouse:** see *jew*.

**CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.** Christ's Hospital owes to Charles Lamb, and to a lesser extent to two other former pupils, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt, a place in literature which no other school possesses, however much its Old Boys may have delivered themselves of reminiscences. The fact that in writing about their schooldays these three mentioned one or two examples of the school slang of

their day seems also to have given a special impetus to Christ's Hospital slang. Two of the words mentioned by Lamb, *crug* (=bread) and *gag* (=meat), have been in continuous use ever since, and it seems likely that they owe to him their survival. Probably for the same reason the existence of a distinctive vocabulary has long been a matter of pride to Old Blues, and remains so to the present day. Reminiscences of Christ's Hospital for the last hundred years have generally contained some notice of slang current in the author's day, and one of these works in particular, W. H. Blanch's 'Bluecoat Boy' (1877), describing conditions during the author's school-days, 1843-51, has a glossary of forty-four distinctively Christ's Hospital words, which are of great interest. More recently Edmund Blunden, another of the many literary Old Blues, has dealt with the subject in his 'Christ's Hospital.' It is noteworthy, too, that Old Blues have contributed material for this book more numerous and more voluminously than the Old Boys of any other school, which is some indication of present-day interest. In all over 200 items have been assembled, most of which are, or were before they became obsolete, peculiar to this one school. All those of particular interest are included in this article or elsewhere: references will be found below.

Christ's Hospital slang has a very distinctive tone or character of its own, which, however, is difficult to analyze. It is predominantly English, somewhat unsophisticated, with a tendency to original coinages, abbreviations and forms of words which are markedly juvenile. In spite of the long existence of the school in London, it does not appear that popular slang has had much effect upon its vocabulary. A few interesting derivations from Latin (e.g. *spadge*, *scrub*) or Greek (e.g. *rump*, *fag*) testify to the school's long classical tradition; but these are less numerous than one might have expected. The existence of a preparatory school at Hertford (from the middle of the seventeenth century) accounts for some special Hertford words or variant forms.

One particular method of word formation in *-y* is so

characteristic that it may be illustrated in detail. The following list contains all such words as appeared in the course of investigation:

**biggy**: equivalent to *major* elsewhere—e.g. 'Biggy Smith' (1905+)

**bony**: good, probably from Latin rather than French.

**broady**: a broad girdle worn on reaching the form known as *Little Erasmus*.

**bunky**: awkward, badly finished.

**chaffy**: pleasant or pleased (see *chaff*?)

**chihky**: glad, a Hertford word, possibly from the Cockney exclamation *Chi-ike*.

**chizzy wag**: charity boy (Leigh Hunt, 'Autobiography': c. 1795)

**cruggy**: hungry (Blanch), from *crug*, bread.

**cuddy**: difficult, of a lesson (Blanch): see *cud*.<sup>2</sup>

**friendies**: friend.

**fungi**: indiarubber (1914+)

**greasy-endies**: end portions of rolls of duff (1911+)

**Housey**: the nickname for Christ's Hospital (Blanch)

**jickery**: juicy, used especially in connection with certain fruit tarts (1885+): Farmer gives *jicker*, juice, and suggests it is a portmanteau combination, *juice* + *liquor*.

**littly**: equivalent to *minor* elsewhere.

**mivvy**: marble.

**newy**: new boy.

**passy**: passionate, severe, of a master: one of the words recorded by Lamb, who spoke of a master's '*passy* or *passionate wig*,' which was thought to portend evil for the school when it appeared in the morning.

**paxy**: bad, watery, of beer (Blanch): conceivably from Latin *pax*, thus peaceful, lacking in spirit.

**scabby**: selfish (Blanch)

**scaffy**: small, deficient, from *scaff*, a selfish person, for which, however, *scabby* and *scaly* were the usual adjectives (Blanch)

**scaly**: selfish (Blanch)

**scorchy**: discoloured—i.e. scorched.

**scowsy**: mean (1876+), perhaps *scabby* + *lousy*.

**strengthy**: a gymnast.

**towny**: a boy on leaving (1876+): *townies* are ordinary suits, worn only by Grecians, even during the holidays.

**tubby**: a servant who emptied swill-tubs (1898+)

**vishy**: in a temper—i.e. vicious (1907+)

Some of the Christ's Hospital abbreviations are also worthy of attention as a group: the following are unusual:

**cloi**: cloister (1907+)

**cots**: 'the superior shoe-strings of the monitors' (Lamb), from cotton.

**Dep**: Deputy Grecian.

**Eras**: Erasmus, a name given to certain divisions of the school.

**Grec**: Grecian.

**lux**: a splendid thing—i.e. luxury (Blanch)—e.g. 'My knife is *wooston a lux*.'

**matha**: mathematics (PSWB)

**mathemat**: mathematician (PSWB)

**nig**: a dodge or trick (Blanch), an abbreviation of *ingshious*, itself apparently a corruption of *ingenious*.

**poll**: pollute (Blanch)

**pun**: in the phrases *pun out*, *pun of*=inform against (Blanch), an abbreviation of punish (see under *sneak* for details)

**vex**: vexation—e.g. '*Vex* for you'='So much the worse for you.'

Other Christ's Hospital words will be found treated separately or as indicated:

*ack*

*Barnet* (EXCLAMATIONS)

*beadle* (MAN SERVANT)

*beam* (*bim*)

*bite* (WARNING CRIES)

*Bluebottle* (NICKNAMES  
[SCHOOL])

*bodge*

*boss*<sup>2</sup>

*boy* (*fag*<sup>1</sup>)

*brasser* (BULLY)

*brush* (BIRCH)

*buzz* (*blub*)

*cake* (CANE)

*chaff*<sup>1</sup>

*chaff*<sup>2</sup>

*chase*

*clap*

*clog and collar* (PUNISH-  
[various] [2])

<i>cockspike</i> ( <i>spadger</i> )	<i>officiate</i>
<i>crug</i>	<i>owl</i> (HIT)
<i>cruganaler</i>	<i>ox up</i> (PROMOTION)
<i>cud</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>parting</i> (FORMS, NOMEN- CLATURE OF)
<i>doe</i> (blood)	<i>pop</i> (belly)
<i>Erasmus</i> (FORMS, NOMEN- CLATURE OF)	<i>rimp</i> (GREEK)
<i>fag</i> ( <i>tuck</i> , GREEK)	<i>roy</i> ( <i>cad</i> )
<i>fin</i> ( <i>fen</i> )	<i>sconce</i>
<i>flab</i>	<i>scratch</i> (MAID)
<i>fob</i>	<i>scrigger</i>
<i>foth</i> (HIT)	<i>scrub</i> <sup>1</sup> (=small boy)
<i>frart</i>	<i>scrub</i> <sup>2</sup> (=write: LATIN [1])
<i>fudge</i>	<i>scuttle</i> , <i>scuttlecat</i> ( <i>sneak</i> )
<i>fungi</i> , <i>fungus</i> ( <i>bungy</i> )	<i>shag</i> ( <i>dib</i> )
<i>gag</i>	<i>shuffle</i> ( <i>cut</i> )
<i>gallows</i>	<i>Shuts</i> (EXCLAMATIONS)
<i>gear</i>	<i>skiff</i>
<i>gingers</i> (LATIN [3])	<i>skulk out</i>
<i>Grasshopper</i> (NICKNAMES [SCHOOL])	<i>sky-blue</i> (DRINK)
<i>Grecian</i> (FORMS, NOMEN- CLATURE OF)	<i>slop</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>gut</i>	<i>slosh</i> (PUDDING)
<i>hack</i> (KICK)	<i>snitch</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>Hedgehog</i> (NICKNAMES [SCHOOL])	<i>snitch-rag</i> ( <i>snitch</i> <sup>1</sup> )
<i>hoops</i> (GREEK)	<i>spadge</i> (LATIN [3])
<i>Jackdaw</i> (NICKNAMES [SCHOOL])	<i>standing on</i> (PUNISH- MENT [VARIOUS] [3])
<i>jambricks</i> (PUDDING)	<i>strive</i>
<i>jib</i> ( <i>cop</i> )	<i>swab</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )
<i>kiff</i> (DRINK)	<i>swack</i> ( <i>jew</i> )
<i>knock up</i> (PROMOTION)	<i>taff</i>
<i>Lash</i> (EXCLAMATIONS)	<i>titch</i> (BIRCH)
<i>luzon</i> ( <i>luzer</i> )	<i>touchy</i>
<i>mob</i> (PROMOTION)	<i>twig</i> ( <i>cop</i> )
<i>mull</i> ( <i>mill</i> )	<i>wooston</i>
	<i>yellow-hammer</i> (PUNISH- MENT [VARIOUS] [3])

**chuck**<sup>1</sup> (Sutton Valence): see BREAD [1]

**chuck**<sup>2</sup> (Westminster, c. 1860), a treat: quoted in Hotten's 'Slang Dictionary' (1864)

**chuck<sup>3</sup>**: see THROW.

**Chucks**: see WARNING CRIES: and in another sense, see *Bags*.

**chum**, friend. The word, like *pal*, is out of fashion in public school circles today, though, again like *pal*, it is common enough in other walks of life. Earlier and originally it had borne a rather different meaning—namely study-companion or room-mate, one who was not necessarily a friend. This was its sense at the universities, where it first made its appearance during the seventeenth century, and it is so used in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' both as a noun and a verb—e.g. 'You'll be *chummed* with some fellow' (= 'You'll be put in a study with some fellow'). It is clearly one of those university slang words which have found a wider popularity and enlarged meaning outside the confines of their original home. Though, in fact, its origin is unknown, it has often been derived from *chamber-mate*.

**chump**: see DISAPPROVAL, HEAD.

**clank**: see PUNISHMENT (various) [2]

**clap** (Christ's Hospital, Hertford, PSWB), to push in front: *clapper*=one who does so.

See *bile*, *bung*,<sup>2</sup> *fudge*, *oil* [5] and *ram* [3]

**classicus** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**classy**: see APPROVAL.

**clear off, out**: see RUN.

**Clicks** (Bushey): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**CLIFTON**: see

*cab* (*crib*<sup>1</sup>), *snagger* (*cad*)

**clipe**: see *sneak*.

**clog and collar** (Christ's Hospital): see PUNISHMENT (various) [2]

**clout**: see HIT.

**clow** (Winchester): see HIT.

**coach**: one who gives instruction and guidance to students, games-players and athletes: also as a verb. The word, like *cram*, is early nineteenth-century slang, now become almost universal and very nearly standard

English: a writer in 1850, however, felt that it needed apology, speaking of 'what in the slang of the day we universally termed a *coach*.' Its use in connection with sport, which today is predominant, did not come in till the 70's or 80's, when so many sporting terms first appeared. In origin it seems to be a piece of Victorian jocularity, a coach being that which conveys you safely to your destination, whether on the road, in work or in sport. An attempt was later made to introduce *motor* as a synonym, but fortunately this did not catch on.

See also *cram*, *grind*.

**cob**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester, PSWB), 1. a hard hit at cricket, 2. a slogger.

**cob**<sup>2</sup> (Harrow): see *cop*.

**cock**, (1) equivalent to *cheek* (*q.v.*) at Oundle (1930+) and elsewhere, apparently a back-formation from the adjective *cocky*, which was in general use at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and is itself an abbreviation of *cocksure*. *Cozy* was also used—e.g. 'The *coziest* young blackguard in the house' ('Tom Brown's Schooldays')

(2) *Cock of the school*: formerly applied to the boy who was acknowledged leader among his fellows—e.g. Old Brooke in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'

(3) *cock house*: the house which wins a games or sports championship: at Eton till c. 1860, *cock of the College*.

The underlying metaphor in both these cases is of a cock which has ousted rivals and struts supreme and confident on its own midden.

**cock-eyed**: see *wonky*.

**cockle**, spit: for synonyms see *glope*, *gob*, *gosh*, *hoik*, *quiddle*.

**cock on** (Durham): see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**cock-shy** (Westminster, c. 1850, and no doubt other schools), anything to throw stones at.

**cockspike** (Christ's Hospital): see *spadger*.

**cock up** (Charterhouse, St Bees): see *CANE*.

**cod**: see *rag*.

**cog on** (Durham): see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**colleger** (Cheltenham): see *11AT*.

**coll pre'd, to be** (Cheltenham): see *CANE*.

**COLSTON'S SCHOOL, BRISTOL.** An article entitled 'Colstonian English in 1887,' published in the school magazine in 1907, has, through the courtesy of the author, Mr. H. Messenger, provided most of the Colstonian vocabulary given below (words from this source are denoted throughout by the date 1887). The school has a considerable number of words peculiar to itself, and some of these—e.g. *dap*, *dike*, *scheme*, *stow*—as well as others not exclusive to Colston's, such as *cosh* (=cane) and *toke* (=bread), which were current in the 80's, remained vigorously active after the Great War of 1914-1918. Colston's slang has a marked character of its own, differing somewhat from that of the greater public schools: in particular the 1887 collection seems to reflect in its very nature the outlook and philosophy of the typical grammar school boy of the nineteenth century.

In addition to the vocabulary given below, Colston's has several distinctive methods of abbreviation, which will be found discussed under ABBREVIATION.

See

<i>boiled baby</i> (PUDDING)	<i>mall</i>
<i>bung</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>muggety</i>
<i>card</i>	<i>nark</i>
<i>Crib</i> (NICKNAMES [SCHOOL])	<i>Naws</i> (EXCLAMATIONS)
<i>cridger</i>	<i>noggy</i>
<i>dap on</i>	<i>outer</i> (cad)
<i>daps</i>	<i>pur</i>
<i>dike</i> (row)	<i>gunner</i>
<i>doughback</i> (BREAD [3])	<i>scheme</i> (cut)
<i>duck's news</i>	<i>scheme out</i>
<i>Fair dags</i> (EXCLAMATIONS)	<i>scrummy-handed</i>
<i>fodge</i> (fudge)	<i>stally</i> (PUDDING)
<i>friends</i> (people)	<i>Stow</i> (WARNING CRIES)
<i>gunger</i> (bungy)	<i>stuff</i> (tuck)
<i>Joey</i> (HEADMASTER)	<i>timmy</i>
<i>kid</i> (BOY)	<i>toe</i> (KICK)
<i>lacquey</i> (MAN SERVANT)	

**colt.** Commonly applied to junior boys (generally under sixteen), who show promise at cricket or football, receive special training, and play as a team. The meta-

phor is from racing: it was probably used, e.g., in connection with county cricket before finding its way into schools, and at one time might also be used of beginners, novices, in a general sense. According to Farmer it was also synonymous with *fag* (*q.v.*)

**common-roomed, to be** (Lancing): see **CANE**.

**COMMUNION.** There are a number of slang synonyms, of varying degrees of irreverence. *Beano* (Cheltenham, 1916+) is the least innocuous. Others are *early com* (Malvern, 1912+), *early digs* (=prayers: Shrewsbury, 1930+) and *commugger* (St Bees, 1915+; Uppingham, 1913+)

See *sticking, tax*, for similar irreverence.

**con<sup>1</sup>** (Eton, c. 1830): *to be strong con with*=to be on intimate terms with: possibly an abbreviation of *confidence, connection*, or some such word.

**con<sup>2</sup>** (Winchester): see **FALSE ETYMOLOGY, HIT.**

**conduct** (Eton) see **LATIN [2]**

**conk, nose:** largely obsolete today. See *boko, neb*.

**conk out, peg out:** schoolboy equivalents of the universally popular euphemism *pass away*=die.

**conquers, more often, but wrongly, spelt conkers:** a game played with chestnuts threaded on strings, once popular, along with marbles, snobs and tops, at the public schools, but now very much beneath their dignity. Also known as *chessers*.

**continent** (Winchester) see *abroad*

**cook** (Marlborough). see *crib*<sup>1</sup>

**cop:** to catch an offender also as a noun—e.g. ‘a good *cop*.’ The word is a cant term of some age, and possibly Hebrew origin, widely used both inside and outside schools: hence *copper*=policeman. There is no doubt, however, that many schools would regard the word as vulgar and prefer their own equivalents. Some of these (by no means always confined to schools) are as follows:

**cob** (Harrow, 1906+): a corruption of *cop*: also used at Tettenhall (1930+)=reserve, *bag* a seat, etc.; and at Stonyhurst (PSWB)=*bag* in other senses.

**grip** (Shrewsbury, 1938): hence to be *on the grip* means to be on the look out for a chance of catching someone doing wrong.

**nab** (Brighton, 1920+): when *Nabby* as a master's nickname.

**nail** (Winchester): also = to impress forcibly—e.g. for fagging.

**pinch**: the latest borrowing from the language of crime (see under *bag*<sup>2</sup> for *pinch*=steal).

**pink** (Bootham, 1925): also as a noun, a *pink*=a capture.

**twig** (Harrow, c. 1870) past participle *twigged*. Christ's Hospital (c. 1840) also used the word in a slightly different sense—e.g. 'He got *twigged* for breaking windows'='He got into trouble.' The Hertford equivalent was *jib*.

*Cop it* also = catch it—e.g. 'You'll *cop it*'='You'll get into trouble.'

**copy-cat**: a term applied derisively by small boys, perhaps less often now than formerly, to anyone who presumed to copy or imitate his alleged betters: cf. *pun-cat*, *scuttle-cat* (see *sneak*). All three are very definitely juvenile expressions.

**cork**: see THROW.

**corker, corking**: see APPROVAL.

**cosh**: see CANE.

**cots**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**course, in course** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**Coventry, to send to**: see PUNISHMENT (various) [8]

**cow-juice**: see DRINK.

**coxy**: see *cock*.

**crab**: see ANGRY.

**cram**: as an intransitive verb, to absorb information under pressure for examination purposes; as a transitive verb, to ply with such information; and as a noun, information so presented. This is in danger of becoming standard English, and will doubtless soon do so, if examinations continue. As slang, it belongs perhaps rather to the university than to the school, though widely used in both.

The metaphor involved is from feeding chickens and the like: hence an occasional synonym *feed*. The word occurs in the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1803). As a noun it seems obsolescent, though popular during the last century: Mr. Verdant Green at Oxford (1853), for example, was 'padded over with a host of *crams*' when he entered the examination room, in circumstances which brought the meaning of *cram* very near to that of *crib*. There have been *crammers*, too, for over a hundred years, and indeed the occupation is becoming almost a profession in itself, so specialized is the business of preparing *crams* and forcing their contents into reluctant memories.

See *coach*, *grind*.

**cramps** (Bootham, 1925), prayers: also the verb *cramp* = pray. A characteristically ribald piece of satire.

See also *dicks*, *precès*.

**creek** (Bootham, 1925), a division between blocks of changing room lockers, or between beds: hence *creek-mat* = bedside mat.

**crib**.<sup>1</sup> Both as a verb, denoting the act of cheating, and as a noun, meaning an illicit translation or other source of information, *crib* is now almost universal. Originally it had meant *steal* in thieves' slang, and did not enter polite society and assume its present sense till the end of the eighteenth century. The noun came later, about 1840.

There are a number of synonyms mostly confined to particular schools. Several of these are words which may be applied widely to other forms of dishonesty as well—e.g. *chiz* (Winchester, 1800+), *jew* (Cheltenham, 1928+) and *swiz* (Stonyhurst, 1930+), elsewhere normally denote any form of swindling, while *rush* (Alleyn's, 1930+) may mean either *swindle* or *steal* (Marlborough, 1930+). See under *jew* for further matter relevant to this point. Others are:

**bumph** (Charterhouse, 1930+): the word commonly means paper, hence paper bearing illicit information: see *bumph*.

**cab** (Clifton, 1921+; Shrewsbury, 1938); also as a noun: together with *cabbage*, of which it is probably an abbreviation. it had a wide vogue during the last century.

**cock on, cog on** (Durham, PSWB): in the phrase *to cog on marks*.

**cook** (Malvern, 1902+). common colloquially since c. 1750 of other kinds of swindling—e.g. *cooking* accounts.

**english** (Winchester, WB), as a noun, a translation.

**fag-look** (Oundle, 1930+) see *fag-end*.

**fudge** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840). see *fudge* for full discussion.

**john** (Harrow, 1906+), noun only, a translation; said to be a corruption of Bohn, the famous publisher of classical translations.

**native** (Leys, PSWB), pronounced *nahtue*, a translation. see *nahtue* for other meanings.

**oil** (Rugby, 1926+). see *oil*

A common word of special meaning is *pave*, which denotes the practice of writing the English meaning above words in a Greek or Latin text, thereby presumably paving the way to a successful rendering.

It will be of interest to consider here also three words, *hobby*, *pony* and *plug*, which were current in the universities during the nineteenth century. One who used *cribs* was said to *ride hobbies*, that is, apparently, to use an artificial means of reaching his destination. A similar metaphor is implied in *pony*, 'so called, it may be, from the fleetness and ease with which a skilled rider is enabled to pass over places which to a common plodder may present obstacles' (Hall, 'College Words,' 1856). But *plug*, which occurs in 'Verdant Green,' suggests something to stop up the gaps in one's knowledge.

**Crib**<sup>2</sup> (Colston's): see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**cridger** (Colston's, 1887), a crow: cf. *spadger* = sparrow.

**croby** (Bootham): see BREAD [3]

**crocketts** (Winchester, WB, NB), cricket, more especially small cricket a combination of non-plural *s* with one of the characteristic Wykehamist forms of mispronunciation,

further examples of which will be found under WINCHESTER. To *get crocketts*=to score what is more widely known as a *duck*: cf. *to get books* (see under *book*<sup>2</sup>)

**cropper**: see *howler*.

**cropple** (Winchester, WB, NB). a master *cropples* a boy if he refuses to accept his work and makes him do it again. The word is a Wykehamist mispronunciation of *cripple* (cf. *crocketts*=cricket)

For words synonymous in certain of their uses, see *bottle*, *bowl*, *floor*, *plough*, *ship*, *skew*, *turn*.

**crow** (Stonyhurst) see MASTER.

**CROWD**. Ordinarily a crowd is a *mob* or a *scrum*, both also used as verbs, on the principle of anything rather than the obvious word. But there are a number of synonyms or near-synonyms peculiar to individual schools, since crowds are a common feature of school life.

**barge** (Charterhouse, PSWB), *hustle*: the word is now an Association football technicality and in general colloquial use, but it may perhaps have originated at Charterhouse, which was the cradle of the Association game.

**boose** (Bradfield, 1930+), a crowd: as a verb=to push: possibly from the behaviour of drunks (*booze*=drink)

**brick** (Charterhouse, PSWB), *hustle*: perhaps connected with *bricky*=town boy (see under *cad*)

**bully** (Rossall, 1930+), crowd round or push through —e.g. '*Bully up there*': adapted from hockey, the *bully* in the Rossall game being in the nature of a scrum (see *bully* for other uses)

**busk** (Malvern, 1902+), a crowd of boys pushing: as a verb=to push.

**greeze** (Westminster, PSWB), a crowd.

**kink** (Bootham, obs. 1925), a crowd.

**mob up** (Charterhouse, PSWB), *hustle*.

**mons** (Winchester, WB, NB), crowd, verb and noun: see *mons* for a discussion. f

**mush** (Framlingham, 1899+), to crowd—e.g. ‘Don’t *mush*’: pronounced to rhyme with *push*.

**ram** (Shrewsbury, 1930): see *ram* for other senses.

**sci** (Westminster): see **LATIN** [3]

For words connected with pushing into a queue and taking someone else’s place, see *bile*, *bung*,<sup>2</sup> *fudge*, *oil* [5] and *ram* [3]

**crug** (Christ’s Hospital) bread, at Hertford crust only. The word has acquired a classic fame from the fact that Charles Lamb used it in one of his essays on Christ’s Hospital of the ‘quarter of a penny loaf’ which formed a boy’s breakfast in his time. In fact, it seems likely that Lamb has given the word a lease of life which it might not otherwise have enjoyed, for *crug*, or *crugs*, is still used for bread, and a corrupted form *crud* was current in the preparatory school in 1930. At one time the word was apparently so typical of Christ’s Hospital that the Old Boys of the school called each other *Brother Crugs* (1876). *Cruggy* (c. 1840) meant hungry.

The origin of *crug* is doubtful, but it may perhaps be a portmanteau combination *crust*+*crag*, the latter inspired by the hard and jagged nature of some of the bread supplied.

See also under **BREAD**.

**cruganaler**, **cruganaher** (Christ’s Hospital, c. 1840): a biscuit issued on St Matthew’s Day. This is another linguistic puzzle: Blanch in ‘The Bluecoat Boy’ gives the following not very convincing explanation:

‘We incline to the following derivation. The biscuit had once somethg to do with those nights when bread and beer, with cheese, were substituted for bread and butter and milk. Thence the form *crug* and *aler*. The only argument that daunts us is the remembrance that the liquid was never dignified with the name of ale, but was invariably called *swipes*. Another derivation is “hard as nails” It is then spelt *cruggy-nauler*.’

**crump** (Winchester, PSWB), a hard hit or fall: now fairly general—e.g. ‘He came an awful *crump*.’

**cube** (Charterhouse): see **DORMITORY**.

**cud**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester, WB, NB), pretty, but till c. 1850 it had meant attractive, cosy, nice, and was also used as a verb—to fondle, hug, and also beautify. Wrench identifies it as the Anglo-Saxon *couth*, the opposite of *uncouth*, which has survived in certain dialect forms (*couth*, *cooth*, *cuth*, *couthie*, *coudy*) mostly from the North, but has been so long obsolete in ordinary speech that even Spenser had to explain it. Cf. *cuddle*. See FALSE ETYMOLOGY for another explanation.

**cud**<sup>2</sup> (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), severe: hence *cuddy*, hard, difficult, of a lesson, and (at Hertford) severe, of a master. The latter was also used as a nickname—e.g. *Cuddy Rice*.

**custos** (Harrow): see LATIN [2], MAN SERVANT.

**cut**, avoid, shirk—e.g. to *cut* games, chapel, etc. The 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1803) treats *cut* in several senses as a Cambridge vogue of the period, quoting a fictitious stranger, who found the different idioms unintelligible:

'A man had been *cut* in ehapel, *cut* at afternoon lectures, *cut* in his tutor's rooms, *cut* at a concert, *cut* at a ball, etc. Soon, however, I was told of men, vice versa, who *cut* a figure, *cut* chapel, *cut* gates, *cut* lectures, *cut* hall, *cut* examinations, *cut* particular connections; nay, more, I was informed of some who *cut* their tutors.'

Most of these uses are now well known to the average educated person, and only one, to *cut* games, etc., can be called school slang.

*Cut* is still sometimes used intransitively in the sense of run, and was very popular with this meaning colloquially during the nineteenth century. It is regularly so used in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'—e.g. to *cut* down town, to *cut* away, to *cut* across the quadrangle. The earliest recorded example is from Spenser (1590). This seems to be the origin of the school slang usage, which thus implies running away from something. See under *run* for the particular Rugby idiom to *get a cut*.

Synonyms for *cut*=avoid are *oil* (Winchester: see oil [8]), *scheme* (Colston's, 1887), *shuffle* (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), *skunk* (Bedales, 1918+)

**cut in** (Harrow, PSWB), to attempt to take a place irregularly in the line at Bill (=call-over)

**cut into** (Winchester): see *CANE*.

**cut off** (Harrow, c. 1870), primarily, to hit with a ball, like the Winchester *plant* (q.v.), afterwards to hit in any sense.

**cuts** (Charterhouse, 1915+), shorts: because they were originally long trousers cut short.

**dab**, (1) a clever boy (Christ's Hospital, 1908+), an expert; also *dab-hand*, *dabster*: all very common. For synonyms, see *card*, *jig*, *nark*.

(2) An entrance examination at Harrow held at the beginning of the term, and apparently regarded as fit for experts or *dabs* only, since no second chance is offered. The other entrance examination, held at the end of term, is the *skew* (q.v.)

**daft, daffy**: see *DISAPPROVAL*.

**dame**<sup>1</sup> (Eton): originally applied to the ladies who kept boarding houses for Eton boys, but afterwards used indiscriminately of both sexes, and especially of masters who kept boarding houses (excluding classical masters): now used of matrons, or masters' wives, the former being addressed as *M'dame*.

See *dominie*.

**dame**<sup>2</sup>: see *WOMAN*.

**dap on** (Colston's, 1887), persecute. A *special dap* was a boy disliked by a master and constantly persecuted by him, the opposite of *special suck* (see under *suck*). See also *gunge*.

**daps** (Colston's, 1887), rubber-soled shoes: probably onomatopœic.

**dates** (Haileybury): see *IMPOSITION*.

**DAY BOY**. In most boarding schools day boys, being few in number, are generally held in contempt, and the terms applied to them are derisive. *Day bug* is the best known appellation: Harrow (1887) had the variant *home bug*. The Shrewsbury *skyte* (q.v.) a century ago was equally uncomplimentary in effect, as was its predecessor *snob* (c. 1880), a word which at that date had not assumed

its present sense and meant generally a lower class or inferior person.

**deacon** (Bootham): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**debag**, to remove the trousers by force. This must be a fairly recent (and quite effective) coinage, which doubtless originated in the older universities, where the pleasant custom of *debagging* those who offend against the social code still flourishes. *Debagging* at schools, however, is not unknown.

**decent**: see APPROVAL.

**dee**: see MONEY.

**deep end, to go off the**: see ANGRY.

**dekko**, look—e.g. 'Let's have a *dekko*,' 'Give us a *dekko*.' The word is Hindustani, and must have reached this country by way of the Army: it was in use before the Great War of 1914-1918.

See ARMY SLANG for other oriental and military contributions to school slang, and *squint* for a synonym.

**demotion**: see PROMOTION.

**DENSTONE**: see

<i>mouldies</i> (BREAD [2])	<i>Squats</i> (EXCLAMATIONS)
	<i>squeezer</i> (DRINK)

**DERBY SCHOOL**: see

<i>roost</i> (KICK)	<i>slum</i> (oil)
<i>rowsterer</i> (cad)	<i>snitch</i> <sup>1</sup>

**derriwag** (Eton, 1923; Harrow, 1887), paper used for parsing; the word is said to be a distortion of *derivation*, and to be applied to the paper in question on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*. It is perhaps surprising that such a word should be shared by Eton and Harrow.

**desking** (Westminster): see PUNISHMENT (various) [8]

**det, D.T.**: see PUNISHMENT (various) [2]

**dib down** (Pocklington G.S.): see *dicks*.

**dib up**: a boy who has just received a parcel of food may be invited to *dib up* or share it among the company. The older synonym *divvy up* shows the origin of both—namely *divide up*.

The procedure was known as *going shack* at Felsted (PSWB), *going sixes* at Harrow (PSWB), supposedly from cricket played by two boys who bowled and batted alternately for six balls each, and *going snicks* at Winchester (PSWB). Christ's Hospital (PSWB, 1913+) used *shag*=share, verb and noun: cf. *shack* above.

**dibs**<sup>1</sup>: see *dicks*.

**dibs**<sup>2</sup>: see MONEY.

**dick** (Bootham). see *effort*.

**dicker** (Bromsgrove): see *dicks*.

**dicks**: prayers, generally private prayers: also a verb, *dick*, to pray. There is much uncertainty as to the spelling and pronunciation. The following forms are recorded: *dicks* (Bromsgrove, 1916+), *dics* (Rugby, 1917+), *dix* (Tonbridge, 1897+), *digs* (Shrewsbury, 1930+; Rossall, 1930+), *dibs* (Sutton Vallence, 1879+; Forest, 1920+; Lancing, 1938), *dobs* (Sherborne, PSWB), *nibs* (King's, Canterbury, date uncertain), sometimes with a corresponding verb, sometimes without. Pocklington had *dib down*, kneel (1923+). At Bromsgrove (1916+) a *dicker* was a clergyman, and a *nibber* meant a prayer-book at King's, Canterbury. The derivation is supposedly from Latin *dico*, say, in reference to saying one's prayers: but the idiom hardly appears good Latin, and probably some other explanation must be sought. It is worth noting that there are one or two general slang expressions in which *dick* occurs—e.g. *to talk dick* (1860), to use fine language; *to take one's dick* (1861), to make one's declaration: *up to dick*, up to the mark.

See also *cramps*, *preces*.

**dicky**, out of order: see *wonky*.

**dics** (Rugby): see *dicks*.

**digs** (Shrewsbury): see *dicks*.

**dike** (Colston's): see *row*.

**din**, noise: see *row*.

**dink** (Bushey): see ANGEY.

**dippy** (St Bees): see DISAPPROVAL.

**dirty**: see *cad*, DISAPPROVAL.

**DISAPPROVAL.** Boys in general have a great flair for derogatory and vituperative expression, and the vocabulary of school slang is consequently rich in every form of abuse. Much of it is monosyllabic. It has been said that long words are strong words; but monosyllables—at any rate in school slang—have more penetrating power, and it must need a thick skin indeed to remain impervious to the sting of these short, sharp words. Consider a few typical examples, put together haphazard: *swot, swank, sneak, jew, swine, tick, scaff, cad, blog, nip, oik, lout, wet, drip, squirt, squirt, mug, scug, sap, simp, seet, gump, muff, goof, goop, waft*—they are all alike in one respect, they hit the nail on the head (even if the nail is sometimes a little nebulous), and they waste no time about the business. It is the same with abstract nouns and with verbs: they are all economical in use and decisive in effect.

School slang, however, does not, of course, confine itself to monosyllables. There are a number of disyllabic epithets in particular, such as *rotten, putrid, stinking, filthy, dirty, mouldy, lousy, loathsome, ghastly, frightful, beastly, blasted, blooming, blinking*, and others more pungent still, which make a great appeal to youth and are in daily use, though sometimes so indiscriminately that they lose most of their force.

Invective again may be expressed figuratively in ways which, though crude, are certainly vivid. The metaphor may be contained in a single word—e.g. *face-ache, fathead, batty* (implying *bats in the belfry*), *half-baked*, or the numerous variations on the *oil* and *suck* themes (see *oil* and *suck*). On the other hand, it may be extended into a simile or figurative expression, generally in accordance with a stereotyped pattern—e.g. 'I wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole'; 'It's the pink limit'; 'He stinks like a drain'; 'You've got a mind like a sink,' etc.

For a detailed examination of certain well-defined groups of derogatory terms, see also *cad, funk, jew, sneak, swank, swat*. Consideration will now be given to those rather vaguely abusive words, the largest group of all, which may be regarded as more or less synonymous with *fool*.

A number of these, very popular since the last war,

involve the notion of wetness or flabbiness, both mental and physical: indeed, the person to whom they are applied may sometimes be described more fully as 'like a wet rag,' 'like a bit of chewed string.' Such are the following:

**dribbler** (Sherborne, PSWB): also *dribble-tank* (Bootham, 1925)

**drip** (Bootham, 1925): also *dripstack*.

**slop** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB)

**squirt**, **squut** and also **squirm** (= *Squirt + worm*)

**wet**: very common—e.g. 'He's an awful *wet*': also *wet hen* and *wet-neck* (Bootham, 1925)

Another considerable group of words in recent use has a definite transatlantic flavour, as, for example:

**boob** (Rugby, 1926+)

**goof**, **goop** (Oundle, 1930+): adjs. *goofy*, *goopy*.

**gump**: now mostly American in its associations, but actually in use in England as early as 1825, though at that time applied to females more often than males.

**mutt**: short for *mutton-head*.

**poon** (Dulwich, 1930+)

**stiff**: almost equivalent to *chap*, *blighter*: at Oundle (1930+) applied to anyone 'large and athletic, a little overbearing in manner.'

**waft** (Oundle, 1930+): adj. *wafly*, with variant *warty*. An Oundle correspondent, still at school at the time of writing, distinguishes it from *wet*, and defines it as follows:

'A *waft* is not necessarily an obnoxious person; *waftiness* means lack of common sense and tact, in fact, general madness, but a *waft* may be very brainy, and a very decent chap. He is just a fool who usually does the wrong thing, and makes himself conspicuous when he does it.'

**wog** (Dulwich, 1930+): generally regarded as short for *gollywog* and equivalent to *negger*, but not so at Dulwich.

**wowser** (Dulwich, 1930+)

The following is a more general collection, from various sources, and covering about a century:

**barmy**: in common use.

**daft, dafty**: very general, and not confined to schools.

**dippy** (St Bees, 1915+)

**dotty, off one's dot**.

**flat**: recorded as early as 1762: it occurs as a noun in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' (1857)

**gowk** (Rugby, 1926+) Scots for cuckoo, and hence a simpleton.

**loop** (Bradfield, 1930+), **loopy**.

**mug**: long current.

**oaf, ovule** (Bootham, 1926): *ovule* is the diminutive.

**puker** (Shrewsbury, PSWB). from *puke*=vomit.

**sap, sappy** (Colston's, 1887): a common abbreviation of *sap-head, sap-skull*.

**sawny** (Eton, 1831). a corruption of *Sandy*, general during the last century.

**scug** (Eton, 1895+)· see *scug* for further details.

**seet** (St Edmund's, Canterbury, 1930+): origin obscure.

**simp** (St Bees, 1915+). from *simple*.

**snitch** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840): it apparently has no connection with other meanings of *snitch* (*q.v.*)

**soft, softy**: long current, both as nouns and adjectives.

**soppy**=feeble, effeminate, sentimental.

**spess** (Felsted, PSWB, 1889) from *specimen*.

**thick**: as noun as well as adjective—e.g. 'What a *thick* I was' ('Tom Brown's Schooldays')

**weak-kneed**=physically feeble.

**wreck**: recently very popular.

These words are not all synonymous they cover various shades of meaning, which in some cases would be most difficult to define exactly, but are alike in this one respect—they are all in some degree contemptuous and derisive.

Fashions in invective change even more rapidly than in the case of other slang, and it is worth while to examine the language of school novels to see how boys abused each other at different periods. In 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' (1857) are the following: *whippersnapper, snivelling young shaver, skulk, milksop, muff, green* ('You are jolly *green*'), *thick, flat* (as noted above), *blackguard, prig*. 'St Winifred's' (1862) has *dog, worm, humbug,*

*ass's head*, *cur*, *mollycoddle*, *soft*, as well as several in common with 'Tom Brown.' From 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' may be added *howling jackass*, *blockhead*, *greenhorn*, *booby*, *stuck-up duffer*, *juggins*, *snob* (=outsider), with *chump* and *fathead* from other sources. It may be assumed that we have here a fair sample of the sort of language actually used by boys between about 1850 and 1880. Today it seems stilted and unnatural, and any of these words which are still current survive only in literature or on the lips of middle-aged and elderly people. They are certainly not used by boys.

A few points may be added about the history of some of them. *Blockhead* is a very old word, with at least four centuries of currency behind it. It is thus rather more dignified and literary than its later equivalent *chump* (earliest date 1883), which denoted first a block of wood, then the head (cf. *to be off one's chump*), and lastly a wooden-headed or foolish person. *Duffer* came into general use in the 40's, being described by a writer in 1845 as 'a slang term which has now become classical'; it is said to be derived from an adjective *duffing*=counterfeit, through the expression *a duffing fellow*. *Greenhorn*, originally used of young animals whose horns were still green, first took a derisive turn in the seventeenth, but, like the others, probably attained its greatest popularity during the nineteenth century. *Jackass* (1823) and *juggins* (1882, 'Punch,' 'You juggins') are typically nineteenth century. *Milksop*, on the other hand, goes back to Chaucer, but had a definite vogue in the mid-Victorian period: such expressions as *sap-headed milksop* are common in fiction. For a discussion of *muff* and its other uses, see *muff*.

**dish**, spoil, break; one of the words given in the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1808) as Cambridge slang, now fairly general among small boys—e.g. 'That's *dished* it.'

**dish-wash**, **dish-water**: see **DRINK**.

**disper** (Winchester, WB), a portion of food, of which seven kinds were recognized: *fat flab*, *fleshy*, *cat's head*, *long disper*, *middle cut*, *rack* and *cut*.

See also *gag*, *noggy*.

**divvy**: see *dib*.

**dix**: see *dicks*.

**dobs** (Sherborne) see *dicks*.

**dock, dock out** (Winchester, WB, NB): a word of many meanings. The WB gives three as current c. 1900: 1. to rub out, 2. to cross out, 3. to tear leaves from a book. The NB (1980) adds five more (under *dock*, without mention of *dock out*)—viz. 4. to stop a *man* (=boy) from doing something, 5. to turn out (the light), 6. to mark a *man's* name on a list as absent, 7. to beat at games, 8. to deprive of.

It will be seen that a connecting thread runs through all this apparent variety. *Dock* means in standard English to cut short tail, hair, food, money, or other supply (according to the Pocket OED). In all the Wykehamist idioms something is thus docked, whether it is writing in a book, the book itself, victory in a game, light, or a man's property, actions, and even presence.

**Doctor**: see HEADMASTER.

**dog<sup>1</sup>** (Tettenhall): see MASTER.

**dog<sup>2</sup>** (Bootham, 1925), soap.

**dogger** (Charterhouse, PSWB), to cheat, sell rubbish. The word is recorded by Farmer without comment, but seems to derive from *doggerly*=doggish or mean and deceitful behaviour.

**dole** (Winchester, WB, obs.), a trick: *dolifier* (PSWB), one who contrives a trick. Ultimately, of course, a Latin word (*dolus*), and more ultimately still Greek (*δόλος*), *dole* probably found its way into Winchester speech not direct from the classics, but through colloquial or dialect English.

**dominie** (Eton, c. 1850), a *dame's* husband (see *dame<sup>1</sup>*), or a male boarding-house proprietor, not a master.

**domum** (Winchester): see LATIN [1]

**don** (Winchester): see MASTER.

**dor** (Westminster): see LATIN [2]

**DORMITORY**: generally *dorm* or *dormy*; at Sherborne c. 1900 (PSWB) *dome* or *doom*. If there are cubicles, they may be *buncles* (Cheltenham, 1926+), *cubes* (Charter-

house, 1915 +), *horse-boxes* (Leys, PSWB), *tabs* (=tabernacles. Leighton Park, 1917 +), or *tishes* (=partitions Wellington, 1915 +)

**dosh-basket** (Bishop's Stortford, date uncertain). dirty-clothes or waste-paper basket.

**dotty** : see DISAPPROVAL.

**doughback** (Colston's)· see BREAD [8]

**doul, dowl** (Shrewsbury): synonymous with *fag*, from the Greek δούλος, slave. The word is characteristically Shrewsbury slang, and has been in use for at least a century. The story attributing its invention to a Headmaster who objected to the implications of the current word *scum* is perhaps apocryphal. According to the PSWB *doul* was also used at Durham, but was obsolete in 1900.

See GREEK for other words of Greek origin.

**doulos** (Shrewsbury). the bottom boy in the Sixth, so called presumably because of certain menial duties attached to the position. See *doul* above.

**dove's food** (Eastbourne)· see PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**dowlings** (Shrewsbury), compulsory football for the rank and file (or *douls*. *q.v.* above), who played *en masse*. It was abolished in the 70's when Association football was introduced instead of the distinctive Shrewsbury game (akin to Rugby football) played till that time.

**down**. Westminster boys both *go down school* and are *down school*. *down*, in fact, is the equivalent of *up* at Eton and Harrow (see *up*)

**Dox** (Tonbridge) see HEADMASTER.

**draw round** (Felsted, PSWB), 1. originally, to hustle about, 2. to chastise in a jocular way, 3. more usually, to smack on the face or head. it is not easy to see how the phrase came to be so used.

**dribbler** (Sherborne), **dribbletank** (Bootham): see DISAPPROVAL.

**DRINK**. If a general word is required, it is *booze*, but perhaps among small boys only. Particular kinds of

drink generally receive derisive appellations like those given to various foods (see BREAD, CAKE, PUDDING). Thus tea, coffee, cocoa, and sometimes even soup, may be known variously and interchangeably as *dish-wash*, *dish-water* (Forest, 1920+), *hog-wash*, *mess*, *pig-swill*, *wash* (Derby, PSWB), and the like. The Christ's Hospital word *kiff*, in use since at least 1887, is applied equally to tea, coffee and cocoa, the implication being that at schools these drinks are indistinguishable. Felsted (1930+) used *beer* sarcastically of cocoa, while Denstone from about 1870 till at least 1914 applied the word *squeezer* to tea, since it was supposed to be squeezed from a bag of tea-leaves. More tea, coffee or cocoa at Bootham (1925+) was *flop*, probably a corruption of *fill up*.

Lemonade and other aerated drinks are usually *pop* or *fizz*. At Tonbridge (1897+) lemonade on tap was *on-and-off*, since to fill a glass it was necessary to turn the tap on and off. In former days, when beer was served, it was called *swipes* (q.v.)

Milk is sometimes *cow-juice*. but at Westminster (c. 1900) was *bag*, doubtless from the cow's udder, at Bootham (1925) *bull* (very elementary humour), and at Christ's Hospital (1820+) *sky-blue* because of its colour, due to a liberal admixture of water

**drip, dripstack** (Bootham): see DISAPPROVAL.

**drive** (Felsted, PSWB), to be late or nearly late for roll-call: also as a noun—e.g. 'He did a *drive*'—and an exclamation (see EXCLAMATIONS). As with some other Felsted idioms, it is somewhat difficult to imagine an explanation.

**driver** (Cheltenham): see MASTER.

**dubbin** (Trent): see MAID.

**dub in**. When a party of boys pool their slender resources to buy something which none alone can afford it is known as *dubbing in*—e.g. 'Let's *dub in* for a pot of jam'—or perhaps *chipping in* (Harrow: 'The Hill,' 1905)

**dubs**: see LAVATORIES.

**duck** (Winchester, WB), face—e.g. 'He *sported infra-dig duck*' (= 'He wore a scornful expression'). The use

is perhaps derived in some way from the verb *duck*=bow or curtsy, but no obvious connection suggests itself.

See FACE for synonyms.

**duck's news** (Colston's, 1887), stale news.

**duffer**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**Duke** (Leighton Park): see HEADMASTER.

**DULWICH**: see

*brickly* (cad)

GOOD-BYE

*Lay off* (*Shut up*)

*poon* (DISAPPROVAL)

*Scram* (*Shut up*)

*tolly* (CANE, LATIN [1])

*wog* (DISAPPROVAL)

*wowser* (DISAPPROVAL)

*yard* (HAT)

**dumb** (Kingswood): see MAID.

**dummet** (St Edmund's, Canterbury): see MAID.

**dump** (Winchester, WB), to put out a candle: connected with *damp*—e.g. to *damp* a fire, to *damp* someone's spirits; also with *dumps*, to be in the *dumps*.

**DURHAM**: see

*barbar* (LATIN [1])

*bottle*

*cock on, cog on* (crib<sup>1</sup>)

*doul*

*fag end*

*geordie* (cad)

*jade* (MAID)

*jink*

*lift* (*swank*)

*nezzar* (WOMAN)

*outer* (cad)

*sappy* (CANE)

*Side off* (*swank*)

*snoke* (cad)

*tepe*

*trek* (RUN)

*twank* (CANE)

*waffle*

**dust**: see row.

**dykes** (Oundle): see LAVATORIES.

**early com** (Malvern): see COMMUNION.

**early digs** (Shrewsbury): see COMMUNION.

**EASTBOURNE**: see

*bath flunkey* (fag<sup>1</sup>)

*brup* (BREAD [4])

*bumble* (MAN SERVANT)

*dove's food* (CANE)

*fains* (fen)

*ike* (cheek)

**effort** (Bootham, 1925), 1. as a noun equivalent to *thingumabob*, 2. as a verb of neutral meaning, like *function* in its slang use. *Dick*, *faff* and *willy* were similarly used at Bootham. This tendency to vague and labour-saving words became common during the last war (cf. *gadget*, *oajah*, etc.: see also *throw*, *keep*, *park*), but was not entirely unknown before (see *sport*)

**egg, egg up** (Marlborough, PSWB), to show ostentatious zeal: hence *egger* and *eggy*. The origin of the word, or of the metaphor involved, is quite obscure.

See *oil*, *suck* for synonyms.

**english** (Winchester): see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**-ER SUFFIX.** Oxford University, Harrow and Rugby share the reputation of having originated the famous suffix *-er*—a 'suffix applied in every conceivable way to every sort of word' (Ware, 'Passing English'). Perhaps it is just as well that the responsibility can never be definitely fastened on one of the three, for the suffix is scarcely a linguistic felicity. But it may be interesting to try to apportion the blame. Partridge, in his 'Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English,' says of Rugby slang:

'Its sole (?) remarkable feature is the *-er* which, when introduced among Oxford University undergraduates, became the Oxford *-er*. At Oxford it began late in 1875 and came from Rugby school (OED *sup.*);

and, in the same work, of Harrow slang:

'Harrow has often been made responsible for a variation of this final *-er* into either *-agger* or *-ugger* . . . but these seem to have arisen at a famous Oxford college . . . and Harrow is guiltless of this invention.'

On the evidence available Harrow should certainly be acquitted of the last atrocity, which belongs very definitely to Oxford with its *Martyrs' Memogger* (=Memorial), *Pragger Wagger* (=Prince of Wales), *Salvagger Agger* (=Salvation Army), *Magger of Bagger* (=Master of Balliol), *wagger pagger bagger* (=waste-paper basket), *Canagger Canoodle* (=Canadian canoe, 1898), and many others. It does not even seem to have become

popular at Harrow, though most schools from time to time have adopted words of this type. A few school examples are: *commugger* (=communion, St Bees, 1915+), *to indignagger* (=to argue with a master, Aldenham, 1923+), *scrigger* (=scripture, Christ's Hospital, 1910+), *condagger magger* (=condensed milk) and *combimaggers* (=combinations, Charterhouse, PSWB). But the case is not so clear as to the plain -er termination. It is rife in Oxford: such words as *fresher* (=freshman), *lekker* (=lecture), *toshier* (=unattached student), as well as more amusing coinages like *godders* (=God Save the King) and *langers* (=Auld Lang Syne), have been used by many university generations. But there is little evidence of its use at Rugby, and no examples are given in the collection of slang in Hardy's 'Rugby' (1911), though this may, of course, be due to the fact that they were out of fashion at that time or not thought worthy of record. On the other hand, Farmer includes the -er suffix in his 'Public School Word Book' (1900) as a Harrow peculiarity, and from Harrow come between twenty and thirty of these words, sure evidence of the existence of others which have perhaps not been recorded. They nearly all belong to the 80's. A correspondent who was at Harrow from 1884 writes:

'We had the habit of putting -er at the end of a word, and either making the word shorter or longer, no matter which, so long as we got the -er for common use.'

He gives a number of examples. There are many more in the 'Harrow Dictionary,' privately issued in 1887. But the fact that in an article on Harrow slang in 'The Harrovian' for April 9, 1870, a number of examples are quoted shows that the habit did not originate in the 80's, and it must certainly have been common in the 60's. The following Harrow list is derived from the sources mentioned, as well as from one or two others:

**abber:** 1. abstract—i.e. *précis*; 2. absit.

**bluer:** blue blazer.

**boater:** the peculiar straw hat worn at Harrow.

**bummer:** ordinary lounge suit.

**darker:** dark room.

**debater:** debating society.

**Ducker:** Duck Puddle, the bathing place (1870)  
**footer:** 1. football; 2. a jump feet first (1870)  
**greyers:** grey flannel trousers (PSWB)  
**harder:** racquets, played with a hard ball.  
**header:** a jump head first (1870): now general.  
**lecker:** electric light (PSWB)  
**miller:** milling—i.e. fighting, ground.  
**mucker:** an awkward fall at football (1870)  
**noter:** note-book.  
**pester:** a special cab for conveying infectious cases to the sanatorium (PSWB)  
**poler:** a kick immediately over the goal-post.  
**recker:** recreation ground.  
**rugger:** Rugby football.  
**Saccer:** the Sacrament.  
**shooter:** shooting coat (1870)  
**soccer:** Association football.  
**Speecher:** Speech Room (1870)  
**Thicker:** Thucydides.  
**tucker:** tuck-shop.  
**whiter:** white waistcoat  
**wholer:** whole holiday.  
**worker:** workshop.  
**yarder:** cricket or football in yard.

To these may perhaps be added *brekker* (=breakfast; generally regarded as an Oxford expression) and *topper* (=top-hat), which Vachell in his novel 'The Hill' (1905) seems to treat as specifically Harrovian.

An amusing comment on the situation occurs in a note in the 'Eton Glossary' on *header* (=headmaster), which is described as 'a vile modernism, perhaps imported from Harrow.' The same glossary records *stinker* (=distinction, in examination) as current at Eton.

Quite evidently Harrow cannot be acquitted of complicity in the crime, but on the whole it seems likely that Oxford, rather than Rugby, was the first offender, as it certainly remains the chief source of further misdemeanours. Nearly all the schools, and even the general public, however, have become involved, and the time is perhaps approaching when some such formations in *-er*, if not in *-agger* and *-ugger*, will be accepted as correct English.

**Erasmus** (Christ's Hospital): see FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF.

**ETON.** It might be supposed that a school of the eminence and antiquity of Eton would possess a body of slang unsurpassed elsewhere. But this is far from being the case. Etonians use a great many peculiar technicalities, so numerous that it has been found worth while to publish a collection of them ('The Eton Glossary,' C. R. Stone, 5th ed., 1928), with explanations for the benefit of non-Etonians and new boys. These include place-names, words descriptive of various garments, terms connected with games and rowing, the expressions used to describe the school organization and its accompaniments at Eton, and the titles given to various ceremonies and special occasions: only a few of particular interest have been included here, notably those which are Latin or of Latin origin, of which Eton has more than most schools. Of actual slang, however, Eton has very little to offer: it would seem, perhaps, that slang in general is eschewed by Etonians, just as, according to Partridge (in his 'Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English'), they avoid abbreviations. Nevertheless, Eton has a certain small body of slang which is of particular interest and exclusive to this one school: a list of these and other words is given below. In addition, Etonians use, or in the past have used, many words which may be said to belong to the general corpus of public school slang, such as *beak*, *cad*, *fag*, *sap*, *side* (=swank), *swell*, *swipe*, *swipes* (=small beer) and *tan*.

See

*battels*  
*beat off* (CANE)

*bevers*

*Bill*

*bob*<sup>1</sup>

*brozier*

*bully*

*bumble*<sup>2</sup>

*burry*

*calæ* (LATIN [8])

*caulk* (THROW)

*con*<sup>1</sup>

*conduct* (LATIN [2])

*dame*<sup>1</sup>

*derriwag*

*dominie*

*fit* (KICK)

*float*

*furk* (*ferk*)

*Fuzee* (MAN SERVANT)

<i>god</i> (blood)	<i>run</i> , to take a ( <i>run</i> )
<i>half</i>	<i>sap</i> ( <i>swat</i> )
<i>Joby</i> (MAN SERVANT)	<i>scug</i>
<i>lush</i>	<i>servitor</i> (LATIN [1])
<i>mess</i> ( <i>find</i> )	<i>shin</i> (KICK)
<i>mob</i> ( <i>rag</i> )	<i>shirk</i> [1]
<i>Muke</i> (GREEK)	<i>shy</i>
<i>nant</i> , <i>non nant</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>sine</i> (LATIN [4])
<i>non dies</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>slick</i> (KICK)
<i>oppidan</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>sneaking</i> ( <i>sneak</i> )
<i>pec</i> (LATIN [1])	<i>sock</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>pæna</i> (IMPOSITION)	<i>stay out</i>
<i>Pop</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>stinker</i> (-ER SUFFIX)
<i>poser</i>	<i>swell</i> (blood)
<i>puppy-hole</i>	<i>swish</i> (BIRCH)
<i>Remove</i> (FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF)	<i>tardy</i>
<i>rouge</i>	<i>tug</i> <sup>1</sup>
	<i>up</i>
	<i>work off</i> (CANE)

**EXCLAMATIONS.** The following are exclamations either peculiar to individual schools or characteristic of boys in general:

**Barnet** (Christ's Hospital, c 1840)=Humbug, Nonsense, like the more commonly used *Barney*: see NONSENSE for other examples

**Beards** (Leys, PSWB): surprise

**Chaff** (Christ's Hospital, c 1840) pleasure—e.g. 'Chaff for you' see *chaff*<sup>2</sup>

**Clicks** (Bushey, 1907+) addressed to a boy who obtained commendation from a master for a piece of work or an action outwardly smart and effective, but to the knowledge of his fellows involving some deception—e.g. if a boy were praised for being smartly dressed, though his friends knew that the buttons of his underclothing were undone, he would be greeted thus.

**Drive up** (Felsted, PSWB)=Stale news: see *drive*.

**Fair dags, Fair do's** (Colston's, 1887): demanding fair play, a fair share, etc.

**Gloat** (St. John's, Leatherhead, 1924+): pleasure: see *gloat*.

**Good on** (Lancing, 1938): pleasure: *Good on you* = Thank you.

**Hard cheese** = Hard luck: see *cheese*.

**Honestly, Honest Injun, Honour Bright**: used to guarantee the truth of a statement upon which doubts have been cast. The first is in common use, the second perhaps obsolete except in school fiction, the third heard occasionally.

**Junket** (Winchester, WB, NB): pleasure: see *junket*.

**Lash** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840): envy.

**Naws** (Colston's, 1930+)· addressed to eavesdroppers or unwanted listeners = Nose, cf. *Nosey Parker*.

**Salt** (Pocklington, 1923+)· disbelief, implying the need for a pinch of salt.

**Scaldings** (Winchester, WB) = Get out of the way, primarily used when carrying hot water, etc., and of nautical origin. It was also current in a more general sense = Be off, Look out, etc.

**Send, Send me** (Bootham, 1925): surprise, amusement or annoyance possibly of biblical origin.

**Shuts** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB) = Sold again.

**Squats** (Denstone, 1924+) contempt.

**Sucks**: contempt, addressed especially to one who fails to get what he wants.

**Vex** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840) = So much the worse for you, the opposite of *Chaff*: see under CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

See also *ack, fen* and WARNING CRIES for other exclamations of this kind.

It is difficult to deal with exclamations of a more general type, some of which are mere sounds of little meaning. Fashions in these change from generation to generation, and among boys from school to school, and for the past we are dependent upon fiction, which is often affected by the writer's own partialities. However, the following groups of exclamations drawn from four well-known school novels may be instructively compared with each other and with the reader's idea of what would be used by boys today:

'Tom Brown's Schooldays' (1857): *Bless us, Bravo, Fiddlesticks, Hurra, Huzza, My eye, Stuff and nonsense.*

'St Winifred's' (1862): *Bosh, By all that's odd, By Heavens, Faugh, Hooroop, Phew, Pish, Pooh, Stuff, Tush.*

'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' (1881): *Bah, Bother, Bravo, My eye, Yah boo.*

'Jeremy at Crale,' Walpole (1927, but dealing with c. 1900): *Gosh, Golly, Crikey.*

Few of these would pass muster today, and on the whole the tendency is now towards terser and more profane expletives.

**exeat:** see LATIN [2]

**FACE.** In the days of Tom Brown *frontispiece* was a fashionable term: later came *mug* and *phiz* or *phizog* (=physiognomy), all rather juvenile words. Winchester had the curious *duck* (q.v.), and Felsted used *pog*, which is explained unconvincingly as a corruption of *pig-face*. See HEAD.

**face:** see *cheek*

**face-ache.** Small boys have long found this word useful as a means of offering mild insult, with the implication that the face in question causes pain to the speaker. *Face* is used likewise—e.g. 'Now then, *face*, what do you want?': probably an abbreviation of *face-ache*.

See DISAPPROVAL.

(Bootham). see *effort*.

**fag.**<sup>1</sup> No school slang expression is more familiar to the world in general and yet more indisputably school slang than this. It denotes, of course, a small boy who acts in the capacity of personal servant to one of his seniors, called in this connection a *fag-master*. The institution of *fagging* is one which has been typical for centuries of the English public school system, and still continues in spite of increasing criticism from those who feel that there is something undignified in working for another. *Fag* is first recorded in this sense from a writer

of 1785, followed a little later by its use as a verb, 1. intransitively, to serve as a *fag*—e.g. 'I *fagged* for Jones'; 2. transitively, to use as a *fag*—e.g. 'Jones *fagged* me'; 3. in the idiom *to fag out*, meaning to field at cricket, which now seems obsolete. There was also at one time a noun *faggery*, perhaps more literary than colloquial, which did not catch on. The word *fag* probably owes a great deal of its popularity to 'Tom Brown's Schooldays.'

There are a good many synonyms. Cheltenham (1915), with its military traditions, has *orderly*; Lancing (1938) uses *underschool*, both as a noun, and more strange as a verb, Christ's Hospital (1876+) had the officer *swab*; and Shrewsbury a century ago the equally unpleasant *scum*, later to some extent superseded by the prevalent *doul* (*q.v.*). Winchester prefers *sweater*, v. the verb *sweat*. Other equivalents quoted by Farmer are *sat* (=satellite), *colt* (*q.v.* for another meaning) and *lag* (*q.v.*) (Westminster). But the commonest of all is the euphemistic *boy*. It was used at Harrow (1887), with several accompanying idioms: 1. *to be on boy*=to be on *fag* duty (1887), 2. to send a message *by the boy* (1906+), 3. *day boy* and *night boy*=*fags* on duty by day and night respectively. Christ's Hospital (1871) also had *boys*: *Monitors' Boy*, *Grecians' Boy*, *Bell Boy*, *Bellows Boy*, *Jack Boy*, *Platter Boy*, *Lavatory Boy* and *Beer Boy*, which were all privileged as well as menial posts. That the use of *boy* is an attempt to avoid the supposed indignity involved in the word *fag* is shown by the Eton practice of never using *fag* in summoning *fags*, who are nevertheless called *fags* under other circumstances. Stone, in his 'Eton Glossary,' gives the following account of the prevailing custom:

'A *fagmaster* shouts for *fags* in different ways in different houses. Usually it is "Lower Boy" or "Boy." In College it is "Here." In some houses the master will only allow *fags* to be called by name, as the stampede caused by a general cry of "Boy" is somewhat irritating. However, this restriction is often evaded by arranging that all the *fags* run whenever they hear the name of any *fag* called. Or a *fagmaster* makes an inarticulate cry, which no *fag* can say he was sure wasn't his name.'

*Fags* with special duties often bear individual titles: a few examples follow.

**Angel** (Bootham, 1923-): prefects' orderly at breakfast.

**Atramentarius** (Stonyhurst, PSWB): boy responsible for fetching ink.

**Basonite** (Charterhouse, 1874+): whose duty was to fill foot-baths.

**Bath flunkey** (Eastbourne, 1925+): responsible for baths.

**Cup fag** or **Jerry fag** (Charterhouse, 1900, 1915+): whose duty was to clean and maintain challenge cups.

**Jeacon** (Bootham, 1925): who took bread plates for replenishment.

**Ink Boy** (Shrewsbury, mid-nineteenth century) = *Atramentarius*.

**Slave Driver** (Harrow, 1887): senior *fag* in charge of other *fags* on cricket duty.

**Valet** (Winchester, WB) prefect's body servant.

*fag*,<sup>2</sup> trouble, nuisance—e.g. 'Too much *fag*,' 'An awful *fag*.' The corresponding verbal use is rare today, but at Harrow (1884+) *fag* meant to bother or be a nuisance to anyone, and the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1803) records it as meaning to work hard. In addition there is, of course, a common colloquial use of *fag* = tire, exhaust. See also *sweat*.

*fag*<sup>3</sup> (Christ's Hospital): see GREEK, *tuck*.

**fag-end**. At Durham (1921+) *fag-ends* meant eavesdropping or intentional overhearing of a conversation, and an offender was greeted with '*Fag-end off*!' At Tonbridge (1930+), however, it denoted interruption. Both senses were used at Oundle (1930+), where *to pick up fag-ends* meant 1. to overhear—e.g. 'I *fag-ended* A telling B . . .'; 2. to butt into a conversation or interrupt. The first is probably the original sense, since the eavesdropper catches only *fag-ends* of what is being said. See also *officiate*.

A curious extension of the idiom occurred at Oundle

(1980+), where *fag-look* was sometimes used synonymously with *crib*.

**fain, fainers, fain it, fainites, fainits:** see *fen*.

**Fair dags, Fair do's (Colston's):** see EXCLAMATIONS.

**FALSE ETYMOLOGY.** Ingenious etymologizers in the past have sometimes been too prone to see Greek or Latin (especially Greek) in school slang, where none really exists, and caution is needed in considering their theories. The point is well illustrated by the following group of Winchester words, where in each case the derivation given is false, and indeed absurd:

**con** (=sharp blow), from *κόνδυλον*, knuckle.

**cud** (=pretty), from *κῦδος*, glory.

**ferk** =(send, expel), from *furca*, fork.

**genuine** (=praise), from *genuinus*, jaw tooth, because praise is nothing but *jaw* !

**thoke** (=idle), from *θῶκος*, seat.

One might also perhaps include the Shrewsbury *skyte* (*q.v.*)=day-boy, alleged to represent *Σκυθής*, and the Westminster *sci*=town-boy (see under LATIN [3]), professedly from *Volsci*. In every doubtful case it is probably safer to assume that no Greek or Latin is involved. See GREEK, LATIN, for instances of words genuinely derived from these languages (and also perhaps some undetected false etymologies)

**famine** (Bootham, 1925), a shortage of bread at meals.

**fardel** (Winchester, WB, obs. 1900), a division of the Sixth Book (=form) for New College Election: the word is said to be the Middle English *ferth-del* (German *viertel*) =fourth part.

**fathead:** see DISAPPROVAL.

**fatherly** (Bootham, 1925), a serious talk or lecture by a master.

**fed-up**, bored, disgusted, annoyed, etc.: it covers a wide range of feeling between weariness and anger. The expression is said to have been current in the Army before

1914: during the 1914-1918 war it became universal, and seems destined to remain so. It has found particular favour in schools and among the younger generation as a whole, with certain interesting developments—e.g. 'I'm *fed to the teeth*,' or still more forcefully, 'I'm *fed to the back teeth*' (but surely *front teeth* would have been more appropriate); and the adjective *feeding*—e.g. 'It's *feeding*, isn't it?' (i.e. calculated to make one *fed-up*)

Another physical metaphor—namely *sick*—seems to have preceded *fed-up* in these senses—e.g. 'I'm feeling pretty *sick* about it,' with *sickener* as noun—e.g. 'It's a *sickener*, and no mistake' (Vachell, 'The Hill,' 1905) and *sickening* as adjective. These are, of course, still current, but are more dignified than *fed-up*, and not quite so natural to the young: *sickening*, indeed, is sometimes scarcely slang at all—e.g. '*sickening* hypocrisy' (OED)

**fellow:** see BOY.

**FELSTED.** Most of the Felsted words included here are taken from the PSWB, and are thus thirty years or more old. An unusually large proportion of them are of unknown origin, or difficult to explain convincingly.

See:

<i>beanfielder</i>	<i>pog</i> (FACE)
<i>beer</i> (DRINK)	<i>shack, to go</i> ( <i>dib up</i> )
<i>buck</i> ( <i>buck</i> [4])	<i>shants</i> (LAVATORIES)
<i>bug-wash</i>	<i>tetra</i>
<i>draw round</i>	<i>tip</i>
<i>drive</i>	<i>tuz</i> (BAGS)
<i>fain lo</i> ( <i>fen</i> )	<i>vic</i> (WARNING CRIES)
<i>half a hot</i> (MONEY)	<i>wanker</i>
<i>hot</i> (MONEY)	<i>zyders</i>

**fen.** This, one of the most remarkable of school slang words, has many variant spellings, as will be seen shortly: indeed, it is a purely colloquial expression, used according to the fashion of the moment, with little thought as to meaning or origin. But *fen* is to be preferred as the nearest to *fend*—i.e. *defend*, in the old sense of forbid, from which it probably derives. In this form it has long been used as a prefix applicable to various.

terms used in the game of marbles, with a prohibitive sense—e.g.:

**fen-clearances, fen-clears:** removal of obstacles is forbidden.

**fen-dubs:** doubles are forbidden—i.e. if two marbles are knocked out of the ring, one must be replaced.

**fen-goings:** the speaker declines the right to play first, and compels his opponent to do so.

**fen-live-lumber:** moving a bystander out of the way is forbidden.

**fen-placings:** no alteration in the position of the marbles is permitted.

In every case the player who got in his exclamation quickly enough had the right to insist on the prohibition in question. The OED gives 1823 as the earliest recorded use of *fen*, but it must have been used colloquially long before that. It was naturally extended to contexts which had nothing to do with marbles—e.g. '*Fen* larks' (= 'No fooling, please') in Dickens' '*Bleak House*' (1852).

At Christ's Hospital from c. 1840 till at least 1919 the pronunciation *fin* was used, and the expression meant originally the opposite of *Bags I* (see *Bags*)—e.g. '*Fin* first' (= 'I won't go first'); '*Fin* the small court' (= 'I won't have the small court'). Later it had a wider negative use—e.g. '*Fin* playing cricket' (= 'Don't let's play cricket'), or had become merely a synonym for No or 'I won't'—e.g. 'Give me that'—'Oh, *fin*.'

All the other uses are really further extensions of the prohibitive or negative sense, though the recorded spellings are often far from *fen*. As an answer to *Quis?* at Eastbourne (1902+) *Fains* meant a refusal. *Fainers* was also used as a refusal of *Pax*; on the other hand at Reigate Grammar School (1925+) *Fainites* was equivalent to *Pax*. The apparent contradiction is resolved when it is seen that the first is a refusal to stop the game or petty warfare in question, the second a refusal to continue. Farmer records *Fains* also as being used to procure a truce in a game. *Fain lo* (i.e. *loss*) was used at Felsted (PSWB) to reserve a seat temporarily vacated; in short, to prohibit its loss. Other forms recorded are *Fainits*

and *Fain* it. At Bishop's Stortford *fain* was used as a verb=refuse.

A curious development is quoted by the PSWB from Winchester, where *Finy* was used (in College only) as an equivalent for *Bags* not, the last to utter it receiving whatever it was that all wished to avoid. This should more properly be spelt *Finge*, and is evidently an attempt to render *Fain* into Latin as if it were *feign*.

For other expressions of similar meaning, see under *Bags*.

**ferk, fir** (Winchester, WB, NB), expel, send, drive away (the first being the usual sense today)—e.g.:

'Thirty-five *men* (=boys) were *ferked* (=expelled) after the first rebellion.'

'I was *ferked* up (=sent up) to House to *raise* (=obtain) a book.'

'*Junket* over you! I'm *ferked* up (=promoted).'

These examples are from Wrench's WB. The English language has found *ferk* no less useful from the earliest times, and it has borne many meanings, but has now long been obsolete in ordinary speech.

The Etonian *furk*, a football technicality, is possibly the same word. In the Field Game *furking back* denotes kicking the ball back from the *bully* to the player known as *fly* (an illegal procedure): this sense squares well with the other meanings of *ferk*. In the Wall Game two of the players in the *bully* under certain circumstances are known as *getting furker* and *stopping furker*; but it is not clear in what way they are regarded as *furking*.

See also FALSE ETYMOLOGY.

**ferula**: see PUNISHMENT (VARIOUS) [1]

**festive** (Charterhouse): see *cheek*.

**field** (Winchester, WB), support, take care of, in swimming—e.g. 'If you get *hard up* (=in difficulties), I'll *field* you': transferred from fielding—i.e. catching a ball.

**filthy**: see *cad*, DISAPPROVAL.

**fin** (Christ's Hospital): see *fen*.

**find** (Harrow), to feed in one's own room, a Sixth Form privilege, a *find* being a small party of boys so doing. The use is obviously derived from the fact that boys find, or at one time found, their own provisions. Certain rolls were also called *finds*, and since in a particular initiation ceremony (c. 1870) specially hard-baked rolls were used with which to pelt the candidate, it has been absurdly supposed that *find* is derived from Anglo-Saxon *findig*=solid, hard.

*Mess* at Eton and *firm* at Shrewsbury are synonymous with *find*.

See also in connection with food, *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *grub*, *gut*, *sink*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**finjy** (Winchester): see *fen*.

**firm** (Shrewsbury): see *find*.

**first-rate**: see APPROVAL.

**fit** (Eton) see KICK.

**fizz**: see DRINK.

**fizzing**: see APPROVAL.

**flab** (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), **fib** (1876+), butter: **flab** (1887), dripping.

**flat**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**flatty** (St Bees)· see PUDDING.

**flish**, **fliss** (Hereford): see CANE.

**float** (Eton, 1919+), a *faux pas*: also as a verb, to make a *faux pas*, drop a brick.

**flog**: see BIRCH, CANE.

**flogging-horse**: see BIRCH.

**floor**, overcome, master, get the better of: originally a boxing metaphor. Though not heard so much nowadays, it was once popular colloquially, especially among boys and undergraduates, to judge from the evidence of fiction, in several senses: 1. generally—e.g. 'I'm regularly *floored*', 2. specifically, in connection with examinations—e.g. 'That paper *floored* me'; 3. of the examinee—e.g. 'He *floored* the paper.' 3. is probably almost unheard of today, but 1. and 2. still enjoy a limited currency. See *gravel*.

**Rugby** (1913+) has a special slang usage: a boy is *floored* if a master refuses to accept his work. In this

sense the word is synonymous with certain usages of *bottle*, *bowl*, *cropple*, *plough*, *ship*, *skew* and *turn* (q.v.)

**flop** (Bootham): see DRINK.

**fluke**, (1) a lucky hit, a chance success of any kind: also as a verb. The word was originally a billiards technicality, but fills a very definite gap in the English language, schoolboys especially finding it useful for derisive purposes.

(2) Apparently *fluke* also at one time meant the same as *cut* or *shirk*. This is the only sense given in the PSWB, which quotes from 'Eton School-days' (1864): 'By Jove! I think I shall *fluke* doing verses.'

**fob** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB. 1909+), to wear improperly—e.g. 'You've *fobbed* your bands,' 'That button's *fobbed*,' implying that, although the general effect may be satisfactory, the bands are not pinned and the button not sewn on. The word has a wider use elsewhere = cheat, swindle: cf. *fob off*.

**fodge** (Colston's): see *fudge*.

**forage** (Bootham, 1925), 1. to procure, seek, bring back; 2. to find a place at a table other than one's own.

**foreign**, used idiomatically in several schools for nearly a century at least—e.g. a *foreign* match = a match with another school, a *foreign* preacher = a preacher from outside, etc.

**FOREST SCHOOL**: see

*bricks* (BREAD [2])

*grub-shop* (*grub*)

*neck* (*tuck*)

*nip* (*cheek*)

*prog* (*tuck*)

*shark* (*bag*<sup>2</sup>)

*snaffle* (*bag*<sup>2</sup>)

**foricus** (Winchester): see LATIN [1]

**fork out**. A boy who possesses anything, money or otherwise, which others desire may be invited to *fork out*. A rather older synonym is *shell out*. Neither originated in schools or is exclusively school slang.

**FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF**. The names given to the different classes in English schools have a certain mathematical monotony today, seldom proceeding beyond

*Sixth*, though Westminster has *Seventh* and St Paul's *Eighth*. But this was not always so, and there are some interesting survivals.

The Harrow terminology in the eighteenth century is known in detail from the Bills or School Lists first printed in 1770. The school was divided into *Upper* and *Under Schools*, the *Upper School* consisting of *Monitors*, *Fifth*, *Shell*, *Fourth* and *Third Forms*, quite in the conventional manner, but the *Under School* strangely and delightfully classified into *Scan and Prove*, *Ovid*, *Phædrus*, *Upper* and *Under Selectæ*, *Nomenclature*, *Grammar* and *Accidence*, according to the subjects studied.

Stonyhurst followed a somewhat similar arrangement (details from PSWB). *Higher Line* (=Upper School) was divided into *Rhetoric*, *Poetry* (formerly *Humanities*) and *Syntax*, *Lower Line* into *Grammar*, *Rudiments*, *Figures* (formerly *Great Figures*), *Elements* (formerly *Little Figures*) and *Preparatory* (formerly *Abecedarii*). Extra classes were known as *Bus* and *Extraordinary*, while those who had advanced beyond *Rhetoric* (=Sixth) were *Philosophers*.

The picturesque Christ's Hospital system is more familiar to the general reader, thanks to Charles Lamb and others, but is no less mysterious to the uninitiated. In the Upper Grammar School, reserved exclusively for classical pupils, the forms were *Grecians*, *Deputy Grecians*, *Great Erasmus* and *Little Erasmus*, the last two so called because in them the Colloquies of Erasmus were studied to a greater and a lesser extent. A division of *Grecians* was a *parting*, those about to depart first being the *first parting*.

Winchester still retains the very old name *book* for some of the various main divisions of the school (for a full discussion of the word, see *book*<sup>1</sup>). Eton has a unique and elaborate, but not particularly interesting, system of classification of its own. It seems, however, to have given the term *Remove* to the vocabulary of form nomenclature. At Eton this has three senses: 1. a subdivision of one of the six *Blocks* into which the school is divided, 2. the fifth of these *Blocks*, 3. promotion, as elsewhere. Thus, as Stone in his 'Eton Glossary' points out, a boy may

'get a *Remove* out of the first *Remove* in *Remove*.' It is the last of these three which has spread to schools of every sort and kind, where it is perhaps generally applied to some sort of intermediate form, which does not fit into the general classification. Such a form is sometimes also known as *Transitus*

As Eton has given *Remove*, so Westminster seems to have been the source of the now widespread *Shell*, which must have often puzzled those who encounter it. The accepted explanation is that the form below the Sixth at Westminster sat in an apse- or shell-shaped recess at the upper end of the schoolroom, which was known as the *Shell* and gave its name to the form. This may or may not be the real origin of the expression. It is now generally used, like *Remove*, of an intermediate form.

The smallest boys in English grammar schools were at one time known universally as *petties*: at Westminster this term survived till about 1850. It is likely that it did so in other schools also.

**fotch** (Christ's Hospital). see **UIT**

**four-eyes**: see *gig-lamps*

**FRAMLINGHAM**: see

*butty* (cad)

*Cæsar's brick* (PUDDING)

*jim* (MAN SERVANT)

*mush* (CROWD)

*piggy-wiggly-wagtail*  
(*montakitty*)

*putty - and - varnish*  
(PUDDING)

**frart** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB), potato: also *spud* and *taff* (Christ's Hospital, some houses, 1909+)

**frater** (Winchester): see **LATIN** [1], *people*.

**French cricket**: a universal and very popular form of *ex tempore* cricket, in which the batsman's legs form the wicket, and any number of players may take part: as in other games of the kind, the rules are flexible and adapted to suit circumstances. See *gownboy cricket*.

**fresh herring** (King Edward's, Birmingham): see **NEW BOY**.

**friendies**: see **CHRIST'S HOSPITAL**.

**friends** (Colston's): see *people*.

FRIARS' SCHOOL, BANGOR: see

*Boss* (HEADMASTER), *hefty* (APPROVAL)

frightful: see DISAPPROVAL.

frogs' eggs: see PUDDING.

frontispiece: see FACE.

**froust, frowst.** As school slang the word is associated with Harrow, where it has, or had, two senses 1. an easy chair, 2. as a verb, to stay in bed late—e.g. on Sunday. These uses are specified as Harrow slang in an article in 'The Harrovian' for April, 9, 1870, and in the 'Harrow Dictionary' (1887). The wider use of the word outside schools, which equates it more or less with the modern *fug*, seems to date also from the 80's (earliest record, 1884), when '*frowsting* with a book by the fire' (Kipling) and similar turns of phrase were popular. The word possibly spread from Harrow at this time, but the existence of *frowsty* (=fusty), originally a South Midland dialect word, and *frowzy* (also=fusty), first recorded in 1681, shows that it is native English and no mere school coinage.

See also *fug*.

**froust (Winchester):** see ANGRY.

**fudge:** in general slang use from c. 1700=nonsense (see NONSENSE for synonyms), and as a verb=1. to fabricate, 2. to botch, bungle, 3. to cheat. A number of school slang uses are recorded, which are mostly variants of 3.—e.g.:

- (1) **fudge**, to advance the hand unfairly at marbles.
- (2) **fudge** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840, 1887+, 1911+), to prompt in class hence, to tell in any sense—e.g. '*Fudge* me what the time is.'
- (3) **fudge** (King Edward's, Birmingham, 1920+), to take a place in a queue unfairly: see *bile*, *bung*,<sup>2</sup> *clap*, *oil* [5], *ram* [3]
- (4) **fodge** (Colston's, 1887), to fake—e.g. '*a fodged up stamp*': *fodge-up*=cock-and-bull story. This has been regarded, probably wrongly, as a corruption of *forge*.

**fug, adj. foggy.** The primary sense is one common in colloquial usage—a hot, stuffy or steamy atmosphere,

such as 'may be cut with a knife.' The implication may be depreciatory or otherwise: 'What a *fug*!' implies a criticism, but 'Let's get up a *fug*' suggests the prospect of warmth and comfort contrasted with the cold outside. Similarly, the verb *fug* may mean to enjoy warmth and comfort, to avoid fresh air, or simply to stay indoors. According to the PSWB these general senses were Shrewsbury slang c. 1900.

There are a number of derivative idioms:

**fug** (Marlborough, 1930+), a prefect—that is, one who might or did spend more time in warm seclusion than his envious juniors.

**fug** (Marlborough, 1930+, and elsewhere), a bath: *toe-fug* (Tonbridge, 1921+)=foot-bath.

**corps-fug** (Shrewsbury, 1938), O.T.C. uniform: from its stuffiness.

**gym-fug** (Pocklington G.S., 1930+), a gym shoe: for the same reason

**potted fug** (Rugby, PSWB). potted meat: in derogatory reference to its smell.

**fug-footer** (Harrow, 1884+), indoor football.

**fug-pipes** (St Lawrence, 1919+), radiators or hot-water pipes, much in demand as warm seats.

**fug-shop** (Charterhouse, PSWB), carpenter's shop: owing to its stuffy atmosphere.

**fugger** (Tonbridge, 1921+), waste-paper basket: possibly because its contents (in boys' studies) were sometimes smelly.

**fuggy** (general, PSWB), a hot roll.

**fugster** (Pocklington G.S., 1930+), one who wore too many underclothes.

**fug out** (Rugby, 1926+), to clean out a study: probably in reference to the dust or *fug* created in so doing.

For the forerunner of *fug*, see *froust*.

**fungi, fungus** (Christ's Hospital): see *bungy*.

**funk**. One of the indispensable words, which meets such an obvious need that it has become universal, and has even left no room for a synonym. A *funk* may denote any kind of fear, but is most often used of those types of

fear to which schoolboys are most prone. The word, apparently of Flemish origin (in which language there is, or was, an expression *in de fonck sin*=to be in a *funk*), is described in Junius' 'Etymologicum' (1743) as *vox Academicis Oxoniensibus familiaris*, otherwise Oxford slang. How this usage is connected with the other colloquial senses of the word, smoke or smell, if there is a connection, is not clear.

*Pot-funk* (Cheltenham, 1916+) meant stage-fright or nervous anticipation before any important occasion, such as a school match or an interview with the headmaster. It is not clear whether it implies fear of the *Pot* (as the headmaster is called) or nervousness before an athletic contest for a *pot* or challenge cup. See *pickle* for a similar conception.

*furk* (Eton) see *ferk*.

*Fuzee* (Eton): see MAN SERVANT.

*gag* (Christ's Hospital) defined by Charles Lamb, to whom it probably owes its continued survival, as 'the fat of fresh beef boiled,' an admirable *gag* indeed. In a well-known passage he describes the contemporary attitude to *gag*

'These unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, unsalted, are detestable. A *gag-eater* in our time was equivalent to a *goule*, and held in equal detestation. — suffered under the imputation.

'Twas said  
He ate strange flesh'

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments, you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bed-side. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he privately devoured them in the night.'

Actually the unfortunate boy took the *gag* he had collected to his poverty-stricken parents, but *gag* was *gag* for all that, and, we may agree, thoroughly detestable.

Although still used for fat in the 80's, it had already assumed its present sense of meat in general, especially

beef, and it was possible to talk of roast *gag* or cold *gag*. Later (1923+) corned *gag* followed. At the same time *gag* seems to have remained an unsavoury morsel of meat (1907+)

See also *disper*, *noggy*.

**galley** (Bootham, obs. 1925), to work hard or otherwise curry favour, equivalent to *soap*, which superseded it at Bootham c. 1925, and to *oil* (*q.v.*) in many other schools. No explanation is forthcoming, unless it is to be connected with *galley-slave* and implies servile behaviour.

**gallous** (Christ's Hospital, obs. 1909), tough—e.g. 'The *mathemats* were a *gallous* set.' This seems to be a portmanteau word, with *callous* as its second element.

**gammy** (St Bees, 1915+), lame; a *gammy* leg being thus equivalent to a *game* leg in more general colloquial usage. Both would appear to be from Welsh *gam*=crooked: but *gam* also=leg in general slang. French *jambe*, Italian *gambe*.

**gas**, verb and noun, talk in a derogatory sense—e.g. 'Shut up *gassing*,' 'What's all this *gas*?' The PSWB records *pi-gas* as an equivalent for the common *pi-jaw*. See *jaw*.

**gat** (Shrewsbury, 1938), a term denoting certain quantities of stationery, four sheets of graph or drawing-paper, or two double sheets of blotting-paper: hence *gats of*=lots of.

**gear** (Christ's Hospital, 1911+), to spoil, especially clothes, cricket bats, etc.

**genuine** (Winchester, WB), verb and noun, praise—e.g. 'He *genuined* my task': possibly from the complimentary use of *genuine*—e.g. 'A *genuine* good fellow,' certainly not from Latin *genuinus*=jaw-tooth (see under FALSE ETYMOLOGY)

**geordie** (Durham): see *cad*.

**Georgic**: see IMPOSITION.

**ghastly**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**gig-lamps**, spectacles: later superseded by *head-lights*. But spectacles have become so common that no one any longer thinks of being funny about them. Boys who wear

spectacles, however, are still sometimes known as *Four-eyes*.

**gingers** (Christ's Hospital): see LATIN [8]

**gizzard**: see *belly*.

**gloat** (St John's, Leatherhead, 1924+), an exclamation of delight—e.g. '*Gloat!* Only eight more days.'

See *chaff*<sup>2</sup> and *junket*.

**glope** (Winchester, WB, obs.), to spit. See also *cockle*, *gob*, *gosh*, *hoik*, *quiddle*. All these words appear to be onomatopœic, except possibly *cockle*.

**gob** (St Bees, 1915+), mouth: as a verb (Sherborne, 1915+), to spit. In English slang as a whole there are seventy equivalents for mouth, according to Farmer, but no other than *gob* appears to be current in schools. For words=spit, see *cockle*, *glope*, *gosh*, *hoik*, *quiddle*.

**god** (Eton, Lancing): see *blood*.

**GOOD-BYE**. Collinson in 'Contemporary English' (quoted by Partridge in 'Slang and Unconventional English') records *Pip-pip*, *So-long*, *Toodle-oo* and *Olive oil* (=au revoir) as common equivalents for good-bye at Dulwich in 1906. Some of these (especially *So long*) are still used, but the word of the moment is certainly *Cheero* or *Cheerio*, which owes its existence to the war of 1914-1918 and is now universal.

**Good on** (Lancing): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**goof, goop** (Oundle) see DISAPPROVAL.

**gosh** (Winchester, WB), to spit. See also *cockle*, *glope*, *gob*, *hoik*, *quiddle*.

**governor**: see *people*.

**gowk** (Rugby): see DISAPPROVAL.

**gownboy-cricket** (Charterhouse, PSWB): a game, according to the PSWB, in which there were twenty bowlers, one batsman, and no fielders: this sounds like a perverse description of French cricket (*q.v.*). *Gownboy* was the term applied to scholarship boys, because of the gowns they wore.

**gowner** (Winchester): see *worms*.

**Grasshopper** (Christ's Hospital): see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**gravel**, baffle, defeat in argument, examination, etc., synonymous with *floor* (*q.v.*). It is much older than *floor*, and has a long literary past. Marlowe's Faustus, it will be remembered, '*gravell'd* the pastors of the German church,' and Shakspeare also uses the word. In fact, if anything, it is on the downward path: Farmer includes it in his '*Slang Dictionary*,' and during the nineteenth century it seems to have been limited to the misfortunes of the examination room. Like *floor*, it apparently involves a metaphor from boxing or some other form of fighting.

**greaser** (Bootham): see *oil*.

**greasing** (Winchester): see *BULLY*.

**greasy-endies** (Christ's Hospital): see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, PUDDING.

**Grecian** (Christ's Hospital): see FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF.

**GREEK.** Though Greek, with Latin, has been prominent in English education for some centuries, its position has always been that of a literary language: no one ever spoke it, or used it for practical purposes in real life. Hence there is very much less Greek than Latin in school slang, and all of it is derived from reading rather than conversation (like the words included in group [3] under *LATIN*, *q.v.*). It has, however, a special interest of its own. The following words are recorded:

**boulee** (Charterhouse, 1874+), a crowd of boys, not necessarily large: from *βουλή*, assembly. According to an account given by Tod in '*Charterhouse*' (1900) a *boule* always implied, and rightly so in view of its origin, a meeting for discussion. A private conversation was by analogy a *privee*.

\***doul** (Shrewsbury, for at least a century), fag: from *δούλος*, slave: also *doulos*=the bottom boy in the Sixth, and *dowlings*, mass football for small boys: see each of these words.

**fag** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1790), food: recorded by Leigh Hunt as from *φαγεῖν*, to eat.

**haggory** (Stonyhurst, PSWB), a garden used for discussion: stated to be from *ἀγορά*, market-place, popular assembly held there.

**hoi** (Rossall, 1913+; Haileybury, 1923+), the lowest game or set at Rugby football; **oips** (Haileybury, 1913+), **hoips** (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), beginners at football; **hoy** (Bishop's Stortford), a townsman or common person; **polloi** (Cheltenham, 1928+), the lowest football set; all from *οἱ πολλοί*, the many, the multitude.

**muke** (Eton): applied to a passage in College reading to two rooms known as *Big Muke* and *Little Muke*: it is plausibly derived from *μυχός*, the innermost part of a house, a nook or corner.

\***pempe** (Winchester, PSWB), a kind of practical joke: = *πέμπε*, send: see *pempe* for details.

**prag** (Leighton Park, 1917+), a punishment which consisted of copying. very dubiously derived from *πράγμα*, something done.

**rimp** (Christ's Hospital, 1911+): as a verb = to sprint, but also as a noun—e.g. 'He has a *rimp*' (= 'He is a fast runner'); from the Homeric adverb *ρίμφα*, swiftly, and probably a recent Sixth Form coinage.

\***topos** (Rugby, 1926+), *topes* (Imperial Service College, 1910+), lavatories: from *τόπος*, place, the use being a euphemism: see under LAVATORIES.

It will be seen that there is an element of doubt about some of these derivations. Others are demonstrably false: see under FALSE ETYMOLOGY for examples.

\*Where a word is asterisked, further information will be found under that word in its alphabetical place or elsewhere as indicated.

**green, greenhorn**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**greeze** (Westminster): see CROWD.

**grimmer** (Shrewsbury, 1938), an unpleasant person: an original Salopian use of the -ER SUFFIX (*q.v.*)

**grind**, 1. to work hard, 2. to make someone work hard. Like *cram* and *coach* (*q.v.*), it is mainly a nineteenth-century word, and possibly originated at the universities. *Grinder* was at one time applied to a task-master, being thus almost equivalent to *crammer*. A century earlier *gerund-grinding* was used contemptuously to describe the work of teachers—'pedagogues, *gerund-grinders* and

bear-leaders,' as Sterne calls them in 'Tristram Shandy' (1762). *Grammar-grund* is still sometimes applied to concentrated efforts on the part of a class to master their Greek or Latin grammar.

**grip** (Shrewsbury): see *bag*,<sup>2</sup> *cop*.

**grip on** (Shrewsbury, 1938), understand.

**groiching** (Bishop's Stortford)· see **BULLY**.

**groise**: see *oil*, *swat*.

**groute** (Cheltenham, Marlborough). see *swat*.

**grovel** (Sherborne), equivalent to *scrum* elsewhere: its somewhat derisive tone suggests that it may have been coined by a *back* with little respect for the virtues of *forwards*.

See also *bully*, *gutter*,<sup>1</sup> *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *rouge*, *squash*.<sup>2</sup>

**groves** (Lancing): see **LAVATORIES**.

**grub**: generally used outside schools of any kind of food, but in schools often equivalent to *tuck*—i.e. used only of non-official food. It differs from *tuck* in being sometimes used as a verb. The principal uses are as follows

- (1) **grub** (Malvern, 1902+), **grub-shop** (Forest, 1920+), **grubber** (Tonbridge, 1930+), **grubbies** (Wellington, 1915+), **grubs** (Bradfield, 1918+), all=*tuck-shop*
- (2) **grubber** (Tonbridge, 1921+)=*tuck-box*.
- (3) As a verb, either intransitive=eat ('He's *grubbing* in his study'), or transitive=feed ('Jones *grubbed* me last night')

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *gut*, *sink sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**guff** (Oundle). see *cheek*.

**gump**: see **DISAPPROVAL**.

**gunge** (Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, date uncertain), persecute—e.g. a master *gunges* a boy. See also *dap on*.

**gunger** (Colston's): see *bungy*.

**gunz** (Rossall, 1885+, 1913+), drill sergeant. Whether the word was originally a proper name, or possibly from *guns*, the remarkable thing about it is that it has persisted so long.

**gut.** This word is popular in schools, and is the centre of a group of idioms, all connected with eating and more especially with eating voraciously. It is not clear when it passed from its wider general sense into school slang, but there is a reference in an anonymous 'Recollections of Rugby' (1848) to a *guttle-shop*, which was the equivalent of the modern *tuck-shop*, and *guttle* in the seventeenth century meant gobble: this may possibly be the source of the modern word.

As a noun *gut* means a feast or hearty meal; the earliest school reference so far obtained is from St Edmund's, Canterbury (1870). The word implies no criticism—in fact, rather the contrary; thus at Christ's Hospital (1910+) a supper provided by an Old Blue for members of his house was generally known as a *gut*. On the other hand, it implies that the participants do justice to their food: a *dormitory gut* (St Lawrence's, 1919+) was certainly not an occasion for standing on ceremony. The verb generally denotes eating greedily: thus a *guttty* (St Bees, 1915+) was one who wolfed his food. But *gutting* at Harrow (1906+) meant simply the illicit buying of food.

Synonymous with *gut* in the sense of feast are *binge*, *blow-out* and *guz*; *swine* (Bootham, 1925) was nearly synonymous as a verb.

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *grub*, *sink*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**guts:** widely used to denote courage, determination, stamina, especially in games—e.g. 'Put more *guts* into it'; sometimes as a touch-line cry of encouragement, '*Guts, guts, guts.*' *Gutsy* is occasionally used as a corresponding adjective, with *gutless*, much more common, as its opposite. The history of *guts* has been much like that of *belly*: once a strong and dignified word, it has now come to be avoided as indelicate by squeamish people.

**gutter**<sup>1</sup> (Tonbridge, PSWB), equivalent to *scrum* elsewhere, but originally applied, according to Farmer, to the space between the opposing sides in a *scrum*.

See also *bully*, *grovel*, *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *rouge*, *squash*.<sup>2</sup>

**gutter**<sup>2</sup> (Bedales): see *cad*.

**guy'nor**: see HEADMASTER, *people*: for *new guy'nor* (Haileybury), see NEW BOY.

**guz**: see *gut*.

**hack** (Christ's Hospital): see KICK.

**ha'dee** (Oundle): see MONEY.

**Hades** (Leys): see LATIN [3]

**hag**: see MAID, WOMAN.

**Haggory** (Stonyhurst): see GREEK.

**HAILEYBURY**: see

*dates* (IMPOSITION)

*groise* (oil)

*hoi* (GREEK)

*moab*

*nymph* (MAID)

*oips* (GREEK)

*toby* (MAN SERVANT)

**hair, to lose one's hair**, etc.: see ANGRY.

**half**. At Eton, Winchester, etc., the term is still so called, because originally, as at other schools, there were two terms in the year. At Winchester the winter term is now *Short Half*, and the spring and summer terms, known respectively as *Common Time* and *Cloister Time*, taken together are *Long Half*.

**half-a-crack**: see MONEY.

**half-a-hot** (Felsted): see MONEY.

**half-baked**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**half-bull**: see MONEY.

**hander** (Westminster): see PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**hang out** (Charterhouse): see *swank*.

**hard up** (Winchester, WB), 1. out of countenance, 2. exhausted when swimming—e.g. 'He got *hard up* and blew.' These uscs share the notion of being in difficulties with the popular colloquial sense, short of money.

**hare**: see RUN.

**Hare-and-Hounds**: a popular nineteenth-century sport, known more recently as a *paper-chase*, and now superseded altogether by cross-country running: for a vivid account of one of these runs, see 'Tom Brown's School-days.' Hunting terminology was for the most part

used. The run started with a *meet*, the torn paper used was called *scent*, and the *hares* were given so much *law* or start.

At Shrewsbury the business was conducted with more elaboration than usual under the name of the Royal Shrewsbury School Hunt. There were *foxes* instead of *hares*, the start was known as *throw off*, and the boy who came in first was called *killing hound* or *killing gentleman*. (For the supper which concluded the season, see *slay*.) Much of this terminology is still preserved at Shrewsbury in the organization of cross-country running and athletics. The captain is *Huntsman*, those next in order of seniority are *Senior Whip* and *Junior Whip*, and those who have running colours are *Gentlemen of the Runs*. The rank and file in a cross-country run are still *hounds*, or the *pack*; to arrange them in pairs at the *throw off* is known as *coupling up*; a pause to allow stragglers to catch up is an *all-up*, and the boy who comes in first is said to *kill*.

A kind of nocturnal *Hare-and-Hounds* at Eton and Harrow about a century ago was known as *Jack o' Lantern*.

**HARROW** shares with Rugby and Oxford University the reputation of having originated the famous -er suffix, and should certainly be held partly responsible: see under -ER SUFFIX for a full discussion, together with a considerable list of Harrow formations in -er. Apart from this Harrow seems to have had little original slang, though it may perhaps claim the distinction of having added *fioust* and *squash* (racquets) to the English language. It is *par excellence* the typical public school in linguistic matters, as the following samples of the Harrow vocabulary recorded at different times will indicate. An article on Harrow slang in 'The Harrovian,' April 9, 1870, includes *buzz* (=throw), *chaw*, *jolly*, *shy* (=throw), *sneak*, *swot*, *tosh* (=bath), *twig* (=catch), *shop* (=cane). An anonymous 'Harrow Dictionary' of 1887 (supplied through the courtesy of its author) has *beak* (=master), *blotch* (=blotting-paper), *brew*, *buck up*, *cut* games, etc., *lag* (=last in the class), *mill*, *swipes* (=small beer), *tag* (=task), *tizzy* (=sixpence), *tolly* (=candle): an 1884+ correspondent adds *bash*, *crib*,

*fag* (=bother), *fug*, *people* (=family), *swipe*, *tuck* Lastly from Vaehell's novel 'The Hill' (1905) come *bag* (=appropriate), *blood*, *blub*, *chuck*, *dotty*, *fork out*, *funk*, *governor* (=father), *hole* (=place), *jaw*, *kid*, *lift* (=conceit), *lout*, *nail* (=catch), *pal*, *peach*, *pi*, *pi-jaw*, *rag*, *rot*, *sack*, *side* (=conceit), *suck up*, *turf* (=kick). All these words are, or were during the period of their vogue, common to the majority of schools. On the other hand Harrow, like Eton, possesses a good many exclusive technicalities relating to games, clothes, etc. (which are mostly excluded from this work), and has had a special penchant for abbreviation, both conventional and otherwise (see under ABBREVIATION). On the whole it would appear that the Harrovian speech for many generations has been slangy but intelligible; and this despite the opinion of a correspondent (1905+), who writes:

'At that time I think the most conspicuous feature of our conversation was the absence of slang. I think it was regarded as rather a feature of preparatory schools and girls' schools to use a slang word, where a plain English one would do.'

See.

<i>base</i>	<i>groise</i> (oil)
<i>Bill</i>	<i>gut</i>
<i>blotch</i>	<i>haul up</i>
<i>boater</i> (HAT)	<i>home-boarder</i>
<i>bosh</i> (boss <sup>2</sup> )	<i>joseph</i> (BOY)
<i>boy</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>Knoggs</i> (MAN SERVANT)
<i>brew</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>lag</i>
<i>chaw</i> ( <i>cad</i> )	<i>school</i> , to give a
<i>chip in</i> ( <i>dub in</i> )	<i>send up</i>
<i>cob</i> ( <i>cop</i> )	<i>shaving</i> (PUNISHMENT)
<i>custos</i> (MAN SERVANT)	(VARIOUS) [1]
<i>cut in</i>	<i>side</i> (PRIVILEGE-TABOO)
<i>cut off</i>	<i>sizes</i> , to go ( <i>dib up</i> )
<i>dab</i> [2]	<i>skew</i>
<i>derruwag</i>	<i>sky</i>
<i>fag</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>slave-driver</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )
<i>find</i>	<i>squash</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>froust</i>	<i>squash</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>fug-footer</i> ( <i>fug</i> )	<i>stop out</i>

<i>swagger</i> (PRIVILEGE-TABOO)	<i>turf</i> (KICK)
<i>swipe</i> (BIRCH)	<i>turn</i>
<i>swipes</i>	<i>twig</i> (COP)
<i>tag</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>up</i>
<i>tique</i>	<i>whop</i> (CANE)
<i>tolly up</i> ( <i>tolly</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>yarder</i>
<i>tosh</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>yards</i>

**hash, hasher** (Charterhouse): see *swat*.

**HAT.** A boy may no longer refer to his *tile* or his *go-to-meeting roof* (=best hat), like the characters in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' nor yet to *boilers* and *chimney-pots*, like those in 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's.' It is doubtful if there is a modern slang equivalent for *hat* pure and simple. But straw-hats, still worn at many public schools throughout the year even in the wettest weather, have acquired several slang appellations—e.g.:

**barge** (Bishop's Stortford), **straw barge** (Dulwich, 1930+): possibly an extension of the notion involved in *boater* (see below)

**basher** (Rugby, 1926+), **straw basher** (Bradfield, 1930+): a reference to the fate which usually awaits such hats.

**boater**: the peculiar straw hat worn at Harrow.  
**straw yard** (Dulwich, 1930+)

The square academic cap is a curious instance of an article which can only be referred to briefly through slang. Both *trencher* and *mortar-board* were certainly slang when they first appeared, but have now become so well established that the need for another slang equivalent is felt, hence *square*. Cheltenham (1916+) uses *colleger* of this kind of hat.

**haul up** (Harrow): a master *hauls up* a boy if he sends for him out of school to present work which has to be done again.

**have over** (Rugby): see *CANE*.

**he** (Charterhouse): see *CAKE*.

**HEAD.** Of the forty-two slang synonyms for *head* listed by Farmer, only *block*, *chump*, *napper*, *nob* and *nut* are

associated with schools. Such words are probably used by smaller rather than by bigger boys, and less in the public schools than elsewhere: the first two have a rather archaic flavour nowadays.

See **FACE**.

**head-lights:** see *gig-lamps*.

**HEADMASTER.** The headmaster generally has a nickname peculiar to himself, but may also bear a hereditary title by which all headmasters at that particular school are known. Some of these show little imagination, as, for example, the *Headman* (Charterhouse, 1920+); the *Head Usher* (Bradfield, 1918+); the *Chief* (Sherborne; King's, Canterbury); the *Boss* (Friars', Bangor, 1920+); the *Old Man*; the *Duke* (Leighton Park, 1917+); the *Guv'nor* (St Edmund's, Canterbury, 1870+); and, of course, the *Doctor*, which is still popular in stories deriving their inspiration from 'Tom Brown's Schooldays.' (This latter gives the idiom *to be doctored*=to interview the *Doctor* or to be caned.) Others more unusual are: the *Dox* (Tonbridge, PSWB), an abbreviation of *Doctor*; the *Bogey* (Warwick, 1930+), which seems to imply unusual qualities in the headmaster to whom it was first applied; the *Twig* (Marlborough, PSWB, obs.), presumably from the headmaster's customary weapon. Certainly the most interesting are those which began as personal nicknames, but have continued as hereditary titles: *Bodger* or *Bidge* (Rugby, 1917+), which was first applied to Dr. James, headmaster 1895-1909; *Joey* (Colston's, 1930+), originally the Christian name of a headmaster in the 80's; *Bin* (Rossall, 1913+, 1930+), of unknown origin, but reputed to have existed as *Bindler* in the 90's; the *Pot* (Cheltenham), which has been in use at least since 1897, though *Jerry* (1916+), which is, of course, an intentional misinterpretation of *Pot*, and the simple *HM* were said to be ousting it some years ago. *My Lord* (Bootham, 1925) stands in a class by itself.

**heave:** see **THROW**.

**heavy:** since the Great War of 1914-1918 very commonly used of someone who is important and conscious of it too,

one who *throws his weight about* (another war-time idiom). Thus a *heavy man* (Warwick, 1930+), a *heavy* N.C.O. (Stonyhurst, 1930+). At the latter school it was also applied to inanimate objects—e.g. 'a *heavy rag*'=a successful *rag*.

See also *blood*, *swank*.

**Hedgehog** (Christ's Hospital) see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**hefty** (Friars', Bangor): see APPROVAL.

**heifer** (Charterhouse)· see MAID.

**HEREFORD CATHEDRAL SCHOOL**: see *fish* (CANE)

**herp** (Bishop's Stortford) see *cad*.

**hiding**: see *lick*.

**HIT**. This simple word has no fewer than forty-eight slang equivalents, according to Farmer, some evidence of the frequency of different kinds of hitting among those classes of society which produce most of our national slang. Only a few of these are used in schools—e.g. *bash* (Harrow, 1884+), *belt*, *biff*, *clout*, *lam*, *sock* ('Give him *sock*,' ' *Sock* him one'), and then only according to the fashion of the moment. See also under **FIGHT**.

A number of names for particular types of blow may be added:

**buckhorse** (Westminster, c. 1850): a box on the ear with the closed fist. from the name of a retired pugilist in the eighteenth century, who allowed himself to be so treated for the sum of one shilling.

**clow** (Winchester, WB). a box on the ear: also as a verb.

**con** (Winchester, WB): to deliver a blow with the edge of anything sharp.

**fotch** (Christ's Hospital, 1887+)· a blow on the head: it is said to have originated in the pronunciation of one of the beadles, who, in describing a fight, said, 'I up and *fotched* him one.'

**owl** (Christ's Hospital, 1887+)· a blow on the head with something hard—e.g. the butt-end of a knife.

**rabbiter** (Winchester, WB): a blow on the back of the neck, of the kind used in killing rabbits.

**swinger** (Charterhouse, 1874+): rhyming with *ginger*: to box the ears: perhaps to be connected with the old word *swinge*, beat, from which it may derive its soft *g*.

Strange as it may appear, such blows were in some cases officially recognized as punishments to be administered by the prefects—e.g. *fotch* and *owl*: otherwise they represented a form of bullying. For other bullying, see BULLY.

**hobbs** (Tonbridge. PSWB), a fad, eccentricity: see *tachs*.

**hobby**: see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**hog-wash**: see DRINK.

**hoik** (Bootham, 1925), to spit, probably onomatopœic (for synonyms, see *cockle*, *clope*, *gob*, *gosh*, *quiddle*): hence, perhaps, *hoik*, *oik*=a common person (see under *cad*)

**hoi**, **hoips**: see GREEK.

**home-boarder** (Harrow, date uncertain), at cricket, a pull, probably because home-boarders in general were addicted to this less scientific stroke.

**home-bug**: see DAY BOY.

**Honestly**, **Honest Injun**, **Honour bright**: see EXCLAMATIONS.

**hoof**: see KICK.

**hoof it**: see RUN.

**hook it**: see RUN.

**hooter** (Bradfield) see BREAD [3]

**hop it**: see RUN.

**horse**: see BIRCH.

**horse-box**: see DORMITORY.

**hot**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester), the Winchester football equivalent of the *scrum*, consisting of four forwards, or *ups*, as they are called, one *over the ball*, with two to back him up with their knees behind his and arms interlaced around him, and a fourth to propel him forward with back and shoulders. The word seems to denote the place where play is hottest.

See also *bully*, *grovel*, *gutter*,<sup>1</sup> *rouge*, *squash*<sup>2</sup>: and for other Winchester football terms, *bust*, *canvas*, *plant*, *tag*,<sup>1</sup> *worms*.

**hot<sup>2</sup>** (Felsted): see MONEY.

**hot<sup>3</sup>** (Bootham). see APPROVAL.

**hot up** (Winchester): see PROMOTION.

**Housey**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**howler**. The craze for collecting and publishing schoolboy *howlers*, now in full swing, appears to have started in the 90's as a minor accompaniment of the educational renaissance then in progress. The word has thus acquired a quite definite and limited sense, which it did not originally possess when it appeared mysteriously somewhere about 1870. To begin with it meant anything outrageous, anything which proclaimed its outrageousness so obviously that it might be said to howl. The earliest OED quotation refers, significantly, to a wind, a 'regular howler'; this possibly may have been the starting point of the train which has led to the present use of the word to denote a gross blunder achieving by accident (or in many cases no doubt by design) some unexpected absurdity. In the 80's and 90's other and wider senses were still popular. A character in Eden Phillpotts' 'The Human Boy' (1899) defines the then current usage neatly: 'A *howler*, of course, is the same as a *cropper*, and you can *come one* at cricket or football or in class or in everyday life.' This was the sense it bore also in Talbot Baines Reed's 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' (1881). Today we *come croppers* but *make howlers*, and it is no longer possible to do the latter in games or everyday life.

A near synonym was *tip* (Felsted, PSWB): see also *bloomer*.

**hoy** (Bishop's Stortford): see *cad*, GREEK.

**hum**: see SMELL.

**humbug** (Tettenhall, 1890+), to handle (food).

**hunt** (Lancing, 1938): *to score a hunt* or *to score hunts* = to blush: possibly from a boy's name.

See *blow*, *redder*, *toast*.

**hurfi** (Bedales, 1918+), 1. as a noun, a mighty hit, hearty kick, etc., 2. as a verb, to hurtle, move rapidly—e.g. of a bus at forty miles an hour, a fast runner, etc. The word appears to be an onomatopœic coinage, with reminiscences of *hurtle*.

**hypo** (St Bees, 1915+), hard and insoluble sugar, as supplied during the last war from its resemblance to photographic hypo. It was popularly supposed that the sugar was recovered from the teacups, washed, dried and served again.

**ike** (Eastbourne): see *check*.

**Iliad** (Charterhouse): see IMPOSITION.

**IMPERIAL SERVICE COLLEGE**: see

*topes* (GREEK, LAVATORIES), *tramp* (MASTER)

**IMPOSITION**, a written punishment, most commonly involving drudgery without utility. The usual abbreviation is *impat*, with the verb *pot*—e.g. 'I've been *potted*.' Bootham (1925) used *service*, with the verb *serve*=to give an imposition *Cropple* (*q.v.*)—i.e. cripple—is used in the latter sense at Winchester.

One of the most popular kinds of imposition during the last century consisted in copying out one of Vergil's *Georgics*, which were chosen evidently because 500 lines or so was regarded as a convenient length for the purpose. Thus a *Georgic* denotes a very heavy imposition of 500 or even 1,000 lines at several schools, among them Eton, where the general term for an imposition is the Latin *poena*.

Shrewsbury used *penal* in the same sense during the last century. Here it was thought better to sacrifice the flower of English rather than of Latin literature on the altar of drudgery, and heavy *penals* consisted of a whole book of Milton, or later of Pope. A less serious *penal* took the form of copying a single line of 'Paradise Lost' a specified number of times: every Monday morning the headmaster announced the line for the week, so that the practice of what was called *storing* or *stocking penals* became impossible. The word *penal* is still retained at Shrewsbury, but now denotes an imposition of twenty-three lines—i.e. one page—and is also used of imposition paper.

Charterhouse once had a similar kind of imposition known as an *Iliad*, which seems to imply that even Greek was not exempt from such treatment.

The imposition today is but a pale ghost of its former self—e.g. *dates* (Haileybury, 1923+), which consisted of copying out memorable dates on specially ruled paper; *lines* at schools without number; *prag* (Leighton Park, 1917+), denoting a unit of twenty words on a spelling card, to be copied in five minutes (see under GREEK); *side* (Cheltenham, 1928+), an imposition covering one side of a sheet of paper. The tendency is in the direction of less drudgery combined with more utility.

See also PUNISHMENTS (various)

**impositor**: see PREFECT.

**indignagger** (Aldenham): see -ER SUFFIX.

**inferior** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**infra-dig** (Winchester): see LATIN [4]

**ink-boy** (Shrewsbury): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**jack** (Aldenham, 1923+), to stop a game—e.g. 'Let's *jack* now.'

**jackass**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**Jackdaw** (Christ's Hospital) see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**jade** (Durham): see MAID.

**jambricks** (Christ's Hospital): see PUDDING.

**jank** (Oundle): see *cheek*.

**jarrehoe** (Wellington) see MAN SERVANT.

**jaw**, verb and noun, 1. talk, in a derogatory sense—e.g. 'What are you *jawing* about?' 'Shut your *jaw*'; 2. reprimand—e.g. 'He *jawed* me about forgetting books,' 'He gave me a fearful *jaw*.' This use also is derogatory. no one would use it of his own well-merited criticism of others.

Hence *pi-jaw*, an improving lecture or talk.

See also *gas* as a synonym for 1., and under *row* for various usages akin to 2.

**jerry**<sup>1</sup>: most commonly a chamber-pot, but often applied to any kind of vessel—e.g. at Cheltenham (1916+): at Charterhouse (1915+) used of silver challenge cups, which were cleaned by *jerry-fags*. The headmaster at Cheltenham (1916+) was sometimes known as *Jerry*, this being a punning reference to his better-known nickname, the *Pot* (=important person, *big pot*): see under HEADMASTER.

**jerry**<sup>2</sup> (Rugby): see MAN SERVANT.

**jew.** One of the commonest ways of conveying the notion of swindling is through various uses of the word *jew* (by no means, of course, confined to school slang), which may be a verb, or a noun both personal and abstract—e.g. ‘I’ve been *jewed*,’ ‘You *jew*!’ ‘It’s a *jew*.’ Similar slang uses are recorded from the seventeenth century onwards.

There are, however, a number of popular synonyms, which may be considered as a group. *Swiz* (probably from swindle, through *swizzle*) and *chiz* (originally *chisel*) are commonly used more or less as synonyms—e.g. ‘What a *swiz*’; ‘I’ve been *swizzed*’; ‘He’s *chizzed* you.’ So, too, *rook* and *rush* (‘I’ve been *rooked*’; ‘How much did they *rush*, or *rook*, you for it?’) The first of these is from the vocabulary of gambling, and the second is thieves’ slang, but, like other words of this type, it is probable that they passed into ordinary currency before finding a special place for themselves in schools. *Swack* (Christ’s Hospital, PSWB), verb *swack up*, in the same sense, seems to be unique.

An older equivalent, very common during the last century but now probably obsolete, was *chouse*. As a character in Phillpotts’ ‘The Human Boy’ (1899) neatly puts it: ‘A *swiz* is a *chouse* and a *chouse* is the same as a *sell*.’ Its meaning varied, in fact, between the two extremes, swindle and shame—e.g. ‘Nobody could say he’d been *choused*,’ ‘What a *chouse*.’ It was common colloquially in the first sense during the seventeenth century, during which period it was used by many writers—for example, Dryden, Butler and Pepys, the last of whom wrote ‘The Portugalls have *choused* us.’ The derivation from Turkish *chiaus*, an interpreter, hence an untrustworthy person, is probably to be accepted, but the story tracing its origin to a particular occasion in 1609 is doubtless apocryphal.

For another form of swindling, very prevalent in schools, see *crib*.<sup>1</sup> The fact that some of the words discussed above—e.g. *chiz*, *swiz*, *jew* and *rush*—are also in certain schools synonymous with *crib* indicates that cheating really is recognized as a form of

swindling, in spite of its partial acceptance by public opinion.

**jib** (Christ's Hospital): see *cop*.

**jibber** (Marlborough, 1980+), rugger vest. See *swipe*.

**jickery**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**jig** (Winchester, WB, NB), a clever boy: hence *jiggish* = clever. The word was originally less complimentary in general slang, where it denoted a swindler or cheat.

For synonyms, see *card*, *dab*, *nark*.

**jim** (Framlingham): see MAN SERVANT.

**jink** (Durham, PSWB), a dodge at football: now quite common in football journalese as a verb to denote the action of an outside who dodges, side-steps and swerves his way through the opposition.

**Joby** (Eton): see MAN SERVANT.

**jockey** (Winchester, WB, NB). The WB gives three senses 1. to supplant—e.g. 'He *jockeyed* me up to books' (= 'He took my place in class'), also *jockey up*, intransitively = to gain a place; 2. to appropriate—e.g. 'Who has *jockeyed* my *baker*?' (= 'Who has taken my cushion?'); 3. to engage—e.g. 'This court is *jockeyed*.' The last two only occur in the current NB: in fact, *jockey* is now synonymous with *bag*<sup>2</sup> (*q.v.*). Some of its uscs were parallel with those of *bag* thirty years ago: thus *Jockey not* was used by Commoners as equivalent to *Bags not* (see *Bags*). The metaphor is evidently borrowed from the turf, and must originally have implied some form of malpractice.

**joe** (Rugby): see MAN SERVANT.

**Joey** (Colston's): see HEADMASTER.

**john**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester): see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**John**<sup>2</sup> (Rossall, etc.): see MAN SERVANT.

**jolly**: see APPROVAL.

**jolly-ho** (Wellington): see MAN SERVANT.

**jout** (Bromsgrove): see PREFECT.

**juggins**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**juice** (Bootham): see *blub*.

**jumps-and-bumps**: see *montakitty*.

**junior**: see LATIN [1], *major*.

**junket** (Winchester, WB, NB). in the WB an exclamation expressing delight—e.g. '*Junket!* I've got a *remi*'; or as a verb, *junket over*=exult over; in the NB only as a verb=gloat. All these uses are extensions of the original sense of *junket*, to feast and make merry.

See *chaff*<sup>2</sup> and *gloat*. also EXCLAMATIONS.

**keep**, as a colourless verb. see *throw*.

**kibe**: see LATIN [1]

**KICK**. Despite the brevity and handiness of *kick* itself, school slang generally prefers one of a number of equally brief and handy synonyms: *boot*, *hack* (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), *hoof* (Forest, 1920+), *punt* (Malvern, 1902+), *roost* (Derby, PSWB), *root* (St Lawrence's, 1919+; Stonyhurst, 1920+, etc.), *rux* (Bradfield, 1918+), *stub* (Rossall, 1877+), *toe* (Colston's, 1887), *turf* (Harrow, 1906+) Each of these can be used of kicking a boy as well as kicking a ball, such kicking in some schools being even at one time recognized as a type of minor punishment by prefects. In most cases the word can also be used with *out*—e.g. *turf out*, *hoof out*.

Three words of rather more specialized meaning (all from Eton) are *fit* (c. 1900), to kick behind; *shin* (c. 1850), to kick on the shins (apparently a popular method of ill-treating the weak and defenceless about that period); *slick* (c. 1920), probably *slice*+*kick*, originally used of a sliced kick, but now of any kick. See also *bust* and *tag* for other specialized kinds of kick.

**kid**<sup>1</sup>: see BOY, *people*

**kid**<sup>2</sup> (Winchester, WB), cheese.

**kid**<sup>3</sup>: see *rag*.

**kiddy** (Bedales, 1918+), an adjective applied to anything needing distinction from a larger but similar article—e.g. *kiddy* plate, *kiddy* knife, etc.

**kiff** (Christ's Hospital): see DRINK.

**kill-me-quick** (Leys): see CAKE.

**KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM**: see

*fresh herring* (NEW BOY)      *simon* (CANE)

*fudge*      *tank* (CANE)

**KING'S SCHOOL, CANTERBURY** : see*Chief* (HEADMASTER)*nibs* (*dicks*)*chops**Potts* (MAN SERVANT)*nibber* (*dicks*)*touze* (BREAD [1])**KINGSWOOD** : see*dumb* (MAID)*tighting* (PUNISHMENT*pard, perd* (*cad*)

[various] [1])

**kish** (Marlborough, 1897+, 1930+), cushion. The survival of a mere chance formation for at least forty years is remarkable.

See *bot-pad*.

**knock up** (Christ's Hospital)· see PROMOTION.

**Knoggs** (Harrow): see MAN SERVANT.

**knuckle down** (Winchester, WB), kneel down· a survival from times when *knuckle* could be used not merely of the hand but of any joint—cf *knuckle under*, a *knuckle* of ham, etc.

**lacquey** (Colston's)· see MAN SERVANT.

**lad**: see BOY.

**lag**, the last boy in the school or class. The expression is not often heard now, but had a distinct vogue during the last century. The 'Harrow Dictionary' (1887) includes it as Harrow slang, but it is quite certain that most other schools used it too. The PSWB records *log* as the general form, limiting *lag* to Harrow. According to Farmer's 'Slang Dictionary,' *lag* was also synonymous with *fag* at Westminster. If so, it must be an extension of the normal usage, due to the fact that many menial tasks would naturally fall to the *lag* (see *doulos*).

**lam, lamp**: see CANE, HIT.

**Lambs' singing**: see under NEW BOY.

**lambs' tails**: see CAKE.

**LANCING** : see*cheese* (*cheese* [5])*god* (*blood*)*common-roomed, to be*  
(CANE)*Good on* (EXCLAMATIONS)  
*groves* (LAVATORIES)

<i>hunt</i>	<i>redder</i>
<i>laster</i>	<i>rort</i>
<i>outside left (CAKE)</i>	<i>sit out</i>
<i>pintle</i>	<i>stooge</i>
<i>pit</i>	<i>underschool (fag<sup>1</sup>)</i>
<i>plum</i>	

**lark:** see *rag*.

**lash** (Christ's Hospital): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**laster** (Lancing, obs. 1938), a piece of toffee of the right consistency and size to last through a double period in school.

**LATIN.** From the earliest times until quite recently Latin occupied a completely dominant position in English education. Boys not only had to learn Latin as it is learnt now: they learnt nothing else, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were furthermore required to speak Latin in school and at meals, as well as to read and write it. In many schools the use of English was forbidden by statute, and severe penalties were prescribed for infringements of this rule. Consequently Latin of a kind became as familiar as the mother tongue to boys educated under this system, and it would not be surprising if many Latin words and phrases passed over into ordinary out-of-school speech or continued in official usage.

The contribution of Latin to school language is, in fact, a large one, perhaps greater than that from any other source. There are a good many words in general use, and some schools, such as Eton and Winchester, have numbers of Latin words peculiar to themselves. Four main classes of words may be distinguished: 1. words used in ordinary conversation, survivals from the time when Latin was actually spoken; 2. technicalities which have remained in use since the days when school rules, regulations, notices, etc., were in Latin—including some which have probably been introduced recently in imitation; 3. words derived from literary sources, or which involve allusions to ancient history or literature, these being probably Sixth Form productions and not necessarily of great age; 4. what may be called Latin modernisms—

that is, the use or adaptation of Latin expressions in quite un-Latin ways.

(1) To this group belong in the first place three expressions, which are excellent idiomatic Latin, still used by thousands of boys who perhaps know no Latin at all:

\***cave**=beware: see under WARNING CRIES.

**pax**=peace: equivalent to *Stop, Desist*.

**Quis?** with its answer *Ego*=Who (wants what I am giving away?). . . . I (do): this sometimes has a negative answer *Nego*, unintelligible as Latin, but an obvious analogy from *Ego*.

Likewise the universal *pater* and *mater* (=mother and father), with the rarer Wykehamist *frater* and *soror* (=brother and sister), *major*, *minor*, *senior*, *junior*, *maximus*, *minimus*, *primus*, *secundus*, *tertius*, etc., used to distinguish brothers or boys of the same name, and officially adopted for the purpose (see *major*); and the old university expression *Kibe?* a corruption of *Cui bono?* (=Who stands to gain? but probably used as an equivalent to What's the good?). Some others from particular schools are:

**barbar** (Durham, PSWB), scholarship candidate from outside: from *barbarus*.

**bony** (Christ's Hospital), good: probably from *bonus*.

**domum** (Winchester, WB): formerly used as a summons to come home—i.e. back to school.

**foricus** (Winchester, WB), lavatories: probably a corruption of *foricas* from *forica*=closet.

\***novi** (Tonbridge, 1921+), new boy, singular and plural: see also NEW BOY.

**pec** (Eton, PSWB, obs.), money: from *pecunia*.

\***post te** (Charterhouse): originally=after you, but see *post te* for many other senses.

\***preces** (Winchester), prayers.

\***sap** (Eton, Shrewsbury, etc.), primarily one who works too hard (see under *swat*): possibly from *sapiens*.

**scrub** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), write fast, or as a noun, hand-writing: doubtless from Latin *scribo*, and to be traced to the actual use of the word in the classroom. The opposite was *strive*—e.g.

'Shall I *strive*, sir, or *scrub* it down?'

**semper** (Winchester, WB): as an adjective=permanent, as well as adverb=always—e.g. '*semper* leave-out,' '*semper* testis'=a boy always ready to corroborate a friend.

\***tolly** (Dulwich, 1881+), cane. perhaps from *Tolle*=Lift up (your hand): see under CANE.

(2) Under this head come common expressions like:

**absit**, let him be absent: permission to be absent.

**adsum**, abbreviated to *sum*, I am here—i.e. at roll-call.

**aeger**, sick, ill: a note stating that a boy is ill.

**agrotat**, he is ill: a certificate exempting a student from examination on grounds of illness.

**exeat**, let him go out: permission to go out.

**proxime accessit**, he came next—i.e. to the prize-winner.

**Q.E.D.**—i.e. *quod erat demonstrandum*, which was to be proved: placed at the end of a proof in geometry.

Of the same kind are \**custos*, \**monitor*, \**prefect*, \**prae-postor* (the last three also under PREFECT), and the following two groups of words from Eton and Winchester respectively:

*Eton* :

**conduct**, chaplain: from *conductitius*, hired.

**nant**, **non-nant**, swimmer, non-swimmer: probably placed originally at the head of a list of names.

**non dies**, whole holiday.

**oppidan**, one who is not a Colleger: from *oppidanus*, townsman.

**poena**, imposition.

**Pop**, the famous Eton Society: from *popina*, a cook-shop, since the meetings were originally held in one.

**servitor**, a boy in College, whose duty was to keep a record in Latin of the food eaten: long obsolete.

*Winchester* :

**classicus**, the junior of a division.

**course**, in **course**=on duty, probably direct from *cursus* used of a round of duties.

**inferior**, one who is not a prefect: =lower.

**licet, non licet**, as adjectives, lawful and unlawful—e.g. ‘Is it *licet* to sport bakers up to books?’ (WB) = ‘Is it permissible to use cushions in school?’ They are, of course, verbs in Latin, *it is allowed* and *it is not allowed*.

**ostiarium**, prefect on duty: since he was originally posted *ante ostium*, before the door.

**remedy**, holiday: from Latin *remedium*, like *remi* at Westminster.

**socius**, a companion: also as a verb—e.g. ‘He *sociussed* me up Hills.’

**vulgus**, a Latin epigram done three times a week till 1868: a more correct spelling would be *vulgars*, since it is from *vulgaria*, a book of common words and phrases.

All these instances are from Wrench’s ‘Word Book.’

To them may be added the interesting Westminster *dor* = permission to sleep, current in the eighteenth century (PSWB), with the phrase *to obtain a dor*: probably from Latin *dormiat* = let him sleep (cf *exeat, absit*)

(3) Certain words of Latin origin in school slang seem to have come from literary rather than colloquial sources, such as, for example:

**calx** (Eton), in the Wall Game the area behind the goal-line defined by a white line (*calx* = chalk): among the Romans *calx* denoted the finishing-line or goal-line in a racecourse.

**gingers** (Christ’s Hospital, 1885+), teeth. pronounced with both *g*’s hard. It is conceivably from *gingiva*, gum, which might have been encountered in a passage in Juvenal dealing with the discomforts of old age.

**pleb** (Westminster, PSWB), a tradesman’s son: a humorous singular from *plebs*, common people.

**sci, ski or sky** (Westminster, PSWB), a town boy, and hence a crowd, since crowds at football matches consisted largely of outsiders: popularly derived from *Volsci*, the old enemies of the Romans, because the town boys were hereditary enemies of the Westminsters, but the derivation is questionable (see *skytte* under GREEK).

**spadge** (Christ's Hospital, 1730+, and still current), walk, stroll, from *spatiari* 'The Fortunate Blue-coat Boy' (1770) contains this sentence: 'He always carried his *jack* (=leather vessel for beer) with the grace of a full *spadge*,' and adds that this means with a full swing of the left arm, 'which is called *spadging*, a note of defiance to authority.' Later definitions are to walk affectedly (Blanch, c. 1840); to walk up and down together (1876+); to walk with dignity (Blunden, Christ's Hospital, 1908+); to stroll (1910+), to *spadge* to the sick, to go for a *spadge*; to walk (1930+)

\***tund** (Winchester), cane. from *tundo*, beat, pound: see under CANE

Here also may be included literary or historical allusions.

\***Medes and Persians** (Winchester, PSWB): applied to the practice of jumping on boys in bed, but it is not clear why. see under BULLY.

\***Merc** (Mansfield G.S., 1925+), school messenger: Mercury: see under MAN SERVANT.

\***Pluto** (Bideford G.S., 1936+), man responsible for furnaces under ground: see under MAN SERVANT.

**Pontines** (Rugby), certain playing fields: from the Pontine marshes near Rome.

**Salve diva potens** Corner (Winchester): the reference is to an ode of Horace addressed to Venus.

**Styx** (Leys, PSWB), a water-closet: also called *Hades*, presumably as leading to the under-world.

**Thule** (Winchester), the name of a quadrangle, in reference to *ultima Thule*, perhaps because of its inaccessibility.

(4) Idioms such as these are probably not of great age.

**abs** (Winchester, WB): in reality an abbreviation of *absens* (=absent—i.e. at roll-call), but used 1. as an adjective=away—e.g. 'He was *abs* last half'; 2. as a verb—to take away—e.g. 'I *absed* his wind'; 3. as a verb—to go away—e.g. 'I wish you would *abs*.'

**infra-dig** (Winchester, WB). as an adjective=scornful, proud—e.g. 'He sported *infra-dig* duck' (= 'He

wore a scornful expression'), 'I am *infra-dig* to it' (= 'I am scornful of it'): because one who wears a scornful expression looks as if nearly everything was *infra dig*, beneath his dignity.

**nihil-ad-rem** (Winchester, WB): adjective=vague, unconscious—e.g. 'He sported *nihil-ad-rem* duck' (= 'He wore a vague expression'): *nihil ad rem*=not to the point, and refers evidently to the state of mind of the person in question.

**quis** as a verb—e.g. 'He *quissed* his pen-knife' (= 'He offered it to the first claimant'): see *quis* above.

**sine** (Eton): used to describe a House team excluding colours, from the dog Latin *sine coloribus*, without colours: hence 2nd *sine* wrongly used=2nd XI.

It should be noted that the pronunciation of all these Latin expressions is generally that which is known variously as English, old or unreformed (hence *Kibe* from *Qui bono*, and *spadge* from *spatiari*). The modern schoolboy (except at Eton) uses a pronunciation which is at once more rational, more musical and more natural than this.

\*Where a word is asterisked, further information will be found under that word in its alphabetical place or elsewhere as indicated. See also GREEK.

**lats**: see LAVATORIES.

**launch**: see BULLY, *ship*.

**LAVATORIES** almost always have a distinctive slang appellation, of which the most venerable is probably *bogs* (St Bees, 1915+ and many other schools). It occurs in this sense in the 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam' (1808), but cannot have been exclusively a Cambridge word. The OED records *boggard*, meaning a privy, as used in 1552. Other synonyms are *rears*, *lats*, *shants* (=shanties: Felsted, 1930+), *woods* (Marlborough, 1930+), *groves* (Lancing, 1938), *dykes* (Oundle, 1920+), *topos* (Rugby, 1926+), *topes* (Imperial Service College, 1910+), and *dubs*. The last three are probably all derived from the Greek τόπος, a place, and are evidently euphemistic ways of referring to the place in question. It is possible also

that euphemism may be involved in *woods* and *groves*. See also *foricus*, an old Winchester expression, under LATIN [1], and *Styx* and *Hades* (Leys) under LATIN [3]

lay out: see *lck*.

LEATHERHEAD, ST JOHN'S SCHOOL: see

*gloat*

*pickle*

leer (St Edmund's, Canterbury, 1870+, 1904+), a clever trick.

leg: see RUN.

leg-zeph (St Bees, 1915+), pants· derived apparently from the trade use of *zephyr* = a thin vest (through which the zephyrs blow).

LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL: see

*Duke* (HEADMASTER)

*tab* (DORMITORY)

*prag* (GREEK, IMPOSITION)

levy (Rugby, c. 1850), a meeting of the whole school, or of the Sixth, for the transaction of public business—e.g. the formulation of rules for football, or (as in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays') to protest against and stamp out the practice of reporting offences to the masters.

LEYS SCHOOL: see

*Beards* (EXCLAMATIONS)

*native*

*bom* (MAN SERVANT)

*piccaninny* (CAKE)

*caker*

*sink*

*Hades* (LATIN [3])

*Styx* (LATIN [3], LAVA-

*horse-box* (DORMITORY)

TOBIES)

*kull-me-quick* (CAKE)

*toke* (*thoke*)

*lambs' tails* (CAKE)

lick, 1. to thrash (see under CANE for synonyms in this sense), 2. to vanquish, either an individual in a fight, or a team in a game—e.g. 'We *licked* them hollow' (hence the Harrow football technicality, *to lick off the field* = to score five *bases*, or goals, before the other side scores one, an achievement which ends the match). In the second sense *wallop* was once an equivalent: *slosh* had a vogue more recently. Certain other synonyms are applicable only to personal encounters—e.g. *blog* (Rugby, 1926+)

and *chaw*, both in origin having reference to rough handling by town boys (see under *cad*); *dish* (Rugby, 1911+), *session* (Tettenhall, 1930+)—e.g. 'I'll *session* you,' 'I'll give you a *session*.'

There are also a number of idiomatic expressions of similar meaning, which generally appear in the form of threats. Fashions in these have changed much from generation to generation. the following is an attempt at a chronological order covering some eighty years (the earlier examples all taken from school novels):

*I'll give you toco.*

*I'll give you one for yourself.*

*I'll pay (or serve) you out.*

*I'll give you what for.*

*I'll give you a jolly good hiding.*

*I'll half kill you.*

*I'll lay you out.*

*I'll put it across you.*

Only the last three or four have the authentic ring today.

See also *PUT, mill*.

**LIE.** A certain delicacy about calling anyone a liar has produced various oblique ways of referring to the matter. *Thumper*, *whacker*, *whopper* may be used of a particularly gross lie without further particularization (see under *BIG*). There is also *lug* and *ligger*, which seems to be an attempt to get as near as possible to the sound of the word without actually using it; and *cram*—e.g. 'a pack of *crams*,' now seldom heard.

*lift*<sup>1</sup>: see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

*lift*<sup>2</sup>: see *swank*.

*lines*: see *IMPOSITION*.

*lip*: see *cheek*.

*littly*: see *CHRIST'S HOSPITAL*.

*loather* (Rugby): see *cad*.

*loathsome*: see *DISAPPROVAL*.

*lob*<sup>1</sup> (Winchester, WB); strangely applied to that form of delivery at cricket which is elsewhere known as a *yorker*—namely a ball which pitches directly under the bat.

See also *barter, ramrod*.

**lob,**<sup>2</sup> **lobster**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester): see *blub*.

**lobster**<sup>2</sup>: see WARNING CRIES.

**loop** (Bradfield), **loopy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**lose** (Rossall), **lose one's hair**, **wool**: see ANGRY.

**lousy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**lout** (Rugby): see *cad*, MAN SERVANT.

**lugs**, ears.

**luscious** (Bootham): see APPROVAL.

**lush** (Eton, PSWB), a dainty: abbreviated from *luscious*; cf. the Christ's Hospital *lux*.

**luxer** (Winchester, WB, obs.), a handsome fellow: the two Christ's Hospital words *lux*=a fine thing (c. 1840) and *luxon*=de luxe (1909—) seem to be close relations.

**ma**: see MAID, WOMAN.

**mad**: see ANGRY.

**maggots-in-milk**: see PUDDING.

**MAID**. The almost universal synonym for servant maid is *skivvy* or *skiv*, possibly corrupted from *scavy*, scavenger. Bootham (1925) used *stivvy*, apparently but not really a variant of *skivvy* (see *stivvy* for an explanation). A number of other interesting synonyms are recorded:

**betty** (Bootham, 1925): also applied to girls in general, and used as equivalent to Miss.

**dubbin** (Trent, 1880+), **dumb** (Kingswood), **dummet** (St Edmund's, Canterbury): these seem to owe their origin to rules forbidding conversation between boys and maids.

**hag** (Haileybury, 1923+): also widely used of women in general.

**jade** (Durham, 1921+)

**ma-hag** (Wellington, 1915+)

**mary** (Rossall, 1920+; St Edward's, Oxford)

**scratch** (Christ's Hospital, 1898+)

**wink** (Marlborough, 1930+)

Charwomen were satirically known as *heifers* at Charterhouse (PSWB) and *nymphs* at Haileybury (1877+)

See also WOMAN.

**major**, **minor**: **maximus**, **minimus**: **senior**, **junior**, **primus**, **secundus**, **tertius**, etc. These represent various

conventional ways of distinguishing between boys of the same name without using their Christian names or initials. The practice seems to have started during the eighteenth century (no doubt as a direct result of the everyday use of Latin in schools), and different methods have been favoured at different times and places: the commonest series today is probably *major*, *minor*, *tertius*, etc.

See LATIN [1]: also *biggy* and *littly*, Christ's Hospital equivalents, under CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**mall** (Colston's, 1887), drill.

**MALVERN**: see

<i>busk</i> (CROWD)	<i>nip</i> (cad)
<i>cook</i> (crib <sup>1</sup> )	<i>plucky</i> (BULLY)
<i>early com</i> (COMMUNION)	<i>punt</i> (KICK)
<i>grub</i>	<i>snitch</i> (CANE)

**man**: see BOY.

**MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL**: see ABBREVIATION.

**MAN SERVANT**. Like headmasters, the principal male servants at public schools often bear hereditary names or titles. Thus the chief man servant at Harrow has long been *Custos*, which is a definite title, but his assistant (1887) was always known as *Knoggs*, whatever his real name. At Eton (1930) the school messenger was *Fuzee*: this is said to have been originally a nickname prompted by his red hair and bowler hat, which in combination made him look like a fuzee match, but all this had been forgotten by 1930, and the name had come to denote simply the school messenger. Eton also since about 1850 has always had a seller of *sock* (=tuck) known as *Joby* there can only be one *Joby* at a time, and he bears this name whatever his real name may be. Other examples of this class are. *Bogle*, the school-house boots in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'; *Bouse* (Cheltenham, 1897+); *Jolly-ho* (Wellington, 1915+), which Farmer quotes as *Jarrehoe*; *the Potts*, applied to the boots (King's, Canterbury); *Toby* (Haileybury, 1923+). *John* is a generic name at several schools, including Rossall, which

has various kinds of *Johns*, such as *bell-john* and *boot-john* (the feminine equivalent being *Mary*). *Boot-john* is sometimes abbreviated to *budgeon*, as at Bradfield (1918+)

Page-boys and other lesser servants often have similarly distinctive titles, as *Bumble*, in use at Eastbourne for at least forty years, and the amusing collection from Rugby, where every house uses a different name—*Bilham* (or *billum*), *Blog*, *Buggins*, *Jerry*, *Joe* and *Lout*. (See under *cad* for the significance of *Blog* and *Lout*.) *Jim* at Framlingham (1899) appears to belong to this group, but the accepted derivation is from *Gym*. Sergeant, who was responsible for the management of *Jims*.

A few miscellaneous examples may be added. *Bom*, recorded by Farmer from the Leys, where it was applied to the waiters, is said to be an abbreviation of *abomination*, the waiters being at one time so regarded. *Merc* (=Mercury) for the school messenger at Mansfield Grammar School (1925+) and *Pluto* for the caretaker responsible for the subterranean furnaces at Bideford Grammar School (1936+) are more recent and less seasoned coinages, not without some original wit. Much older and more formal titles are *beadle* (Christ's Hospital, 1848+) and *lacquey* (Colston's, 1887)

**MANSFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL:** see *Merc* (MAN SERVANT)

**MARLBOROUGH:** see

*advertise* (swank)  
*bin*<sup>2</sup>  
*bolly*  
*brew*<sup>1</sup>  
*browse*  
*burr* (mill)  
*egg*  
*fug*  
*groute* (swat)  
*jibber*  
*kish*

*oiler* (oil [2])  
*pole* (CANE)  
*rush* (bag<sup>2</sup>)  
*snob cricket*  
*swipe*<sup>1</sup>  
*tolly*<sup>2</sup>  
*turn up* (CANE)  
*Twig* (HEADMASTER)  
*wink* (MAID)  
*woods* (LAVATORIES)

**mary** (Rossall, etc.): see MAID.

**MASTER.** There is probably no school which does not employ some slang expression to designate the assistant masters. The commonest terms are *cavy*, *nix*, and in some of the bigger schools *beak*, all of which are included below, with some others.

**beak:** in use at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse and probably many other schools. This is an undoubted cant term, already current in the sixteenth century for a magistrate, policeman or other arm of the law. See also under **PREFECT**.

**boss** (Tettenhall, 1930+). elsewhere generally of the Headmaster (*q.v.*) only.

**brusher** (Cheltenham, for at least forty years): a bowdlerized form of the very ancient *bum-brusher* = schoolmaster. also *brush*.

**cavy:** from the Latin cry of warning; *cave* = beware (see **WARNING CRIES**): very common in all types of schools.

**crow** (Stonyhurst, PSWB): from the black gowns worn by masters.

**dog** (Tettenhall, 1930+): applied to the master on duty, whose office was known as a *doggerie*, possibly from the dog's life which he led.

**don** (Winchester) as at the universities.

**driver** (Cheltenham, 1916+)—i.e. slave-driver, applied to assistant house-masters.

**nix:** very widely used, especially in the North of England; also as a cry of warning (see **WARNING CRIES**) An attempt at Bootham (1925) to introduce a feminine *nixie* = mistress was ingenious, but perhaps too ingenious to take root.

**tramp** (Imperial Service College, 1910+): evidently a reflection, no longer justified, on the traditionally unkempt appearance of masters.

**usher** (Bradfield, 1918+, and elsewhere): for centuries the word was used everywhere to denote the poorly paid and down-trodden assistants in English grammar schools, but is now obsolete except in a few slang survivals.

**weed** (Alleyn's, 1920+): applied derisively to student teachers.

See HEADMASTER.

**mater**: see LATIN [1], *people*.

**maximus**: see LATIN [1], *major*.

**Medes and Persians** (Winchester): see BULLY, LATIN [3]

**meg**: see MONEY.

**mellow** (Bootham). see APPROVAL.

**Merc** (Mansfield G S.) see LATIN [3], MAN SERVANT.

**mess**<sup>1</sup> (Eton)· see *find*.

**mess**<sup>2</sup>: see DRINK.

**micky off** (St Bees, 1915+), go away, run away: see RUN.

**mike, to do a mike** (St Bees, 1915+), to break bounds:  
cf. *micky off* above See also *scheme out*, *shirk out*, *skulk out*.

**milksop**: see DISAPPROVAL

**mill**. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a fight was almost universally a *mill*: even now the word is not obsolete, though probably obsolescent. Hence the ground where fights generally took place was a *milling ground* (or *miller* at Harrow), and a pugilist was also sometimes a *miller*. Christ's Hospital (1909, 1919) used the variant *mull*. when a fight was about to take place, the cry was *Mull on*. At Shrewsbury (1930+) *mull* was synonymous with *rag* (*q v.*), perhaps implying that it was no longer needed in its original sense. The obsolescence of *mill* is indeed due probably to the fact that prearranged fights accompanied by all the formalities of a public occasion now very seldom take place: like the duel, the *mill* has yielded to the tolerance and good sense of modern generations. Such fights as do take place are more spontaneous, and if serious are settled with the gloves in the gymnasium. *Scrap* is the modern equivalent of *null*, but Marlborough has an attractive synonym in *burr*—the small boy in Boughey's poem 'Bolly' (see *bolly*) 'devoted his life to *burring* and brew.'

See also under HIT and *lick*.

**minge** (St Bees, 1915+): a verb used to describe the action of an over-zealous master or prefect prowling about in search of crime (and, by implication, in the hope of finding it). The epithet *mingy* was applied to such a person, who might also be known as a *minger*. The

latter was sometimes used as a nickname for habitual *munchers*—e.g. *Munger* Smith. In Eden Phillpotts' 'The *Man Boy*' (1899) *munch* is used somewhat similarly to the *healthy movement*—e.g. 'We *munched* out after dark.' See also under *oil*.

**minimus, minor:** see LATIN [1], *major*.

**mivvy:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**moab** (HAILEYBURY, 1877+), a receptacle for dirty plates, etc. from Psalm lx. 8, 'Moab is my wash-pot.'

**mob<sup>1</sup>** (Christ's Hospital): see PROMOTION.

**mob<sup>2</sup>** (Eton): see *rag*.

**mob up** (CHARTERHOUSE): see CROWD.

**mollycoddle:** see DISAPPROVAL.

**MONEY.** Many well known slang terms for money, which have been established among the larger public for generations, are also used in schools—e.g. *brass*, *cash*, *chink* (Warwick, 1930+), *dibs* (Winchester, WB), and *oof* (Cheltenham, 1916+). The same applies generally to the names given to individual coins:

£1: *quid*.

5/-: *bull*, short for *bull's eye*.

2/6: *half-bull* (Winchester), *half-a-crack*.

1/-: *bob*.

6d.: *tanner*, *tizzy*.

1d.: *dee*, *brown*.

½d.: *meg*, which should perhaps be *make*, the spelling given in the earliest existing slang dictionary, Harman's 'Caveat for Common Cursetours'—i.e. *vagabonds* (1556)

There are, however, a few names which appear to be peculiar to individual schools:

£1: *sog* (Charterhouse, Winchester, PSWB)—i.e. *sovereign*.

2/6 or 2/-: *plate* (Cheltenham, 1897+)

1/-: *shug* (Winchester, PSWB, c. 1840)

1d. *hot* (Felsted, PSWB, 1930+)

½d. *half a hot* (Felsted, PSWB, 1930+), *ha'dee*, pronounced hay-dee (Oundle, 1930+)

See also *battels*.

**monitor:** see LATIN [2], PREFECT

**mons** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. noun and verb, crowd' e.g. 'Don't *mons*'; 2. *to mons for* = to agitate for, a development of 1. only recorded in the NB (1930). This puzzling word. it looks like Latin, but there seems obvious connection between these uses and the Latin word for mountain, unless it be that a Wykehamist *mons* is a heap of men.

See CROWD for synonyms.

**montakitty** (St Bees, 1915+), a spontaneous team game of some antiquity and only recently obsolescent, known also as *jumps-and-bumps* (Harlowe School, Essex) and *piggy-wiggy-wagtail* (Framlingham) The following account is from a Framlingham correspondent:

'Two sides were made up. A boy stood with his back to the wall, the next boy lent against him with his head between the first boy's legs, the rest of the side bent down, and made a line of backs, each boy's head against the buttocks of the boy in front. The other side took a run and jump, like leap-frog, along the line, which had to bear the weight. If in jumping one lost his balance and touched the floor, his side had to form the line, otherwise they took turns. If the line taking the weight broke under it, they had to rejoin the line. The danger was when twelve or so were playing on a side, and they did their best to break the line by getting all the weight on the boy they thought weakest, injured knee-joints having been known to occur. It would start one wet or snowy day, and in about four or five days would be being played by a hundred or more boys. Then it would be seen and would be stopped, and would not begin again for another twelve months.'

A variant procedure followed at St Bees was for the captain of the jumping side, when all his men were securely seated on the *kitty* (as it was called), to invite the captain of the *kitty* to guess 'Thumbs up' or 'Thumbs down.' A correct guess resulted in the sides exchanging roles; otherwise the *kitty* had to prepare itself to receive the jumpers a second time.

**mortar-board:** see HAT.

**motor:** see COACH.

**mouldies** (Denstone); see BREAD [2]

**mouldy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**mouse eating** (Alleyn's School, 1920+), house meeting: a pleasing Spoonerism.

**muck**, adj, **mucky**, dirt, dirty: common in popular speech everywhere, and as such more often used by boys than the standard words, but there are several derivative idioms which are school slang proper:

- (1) **muck up**=to spoil in any sense, originally of course by covering with dirt.

Hence (2) **muck** (Shrewsbury, 1938), to hurt.

- (3) **muck** (Westminster, c. 1900), to idle, waste time.

- (4) **muck about**, **muck round**: the more recent and widely used equivalent of (3)

- (5) **muck about with something**, to play about it or handle it carelessly. an extension of (4)

**muff**: a word which had a great vogue during the nineteenth century, but (save in one usage) now seldom heard except on the lips of the elderly. Its earliest use was in connection with cricket (1837), both as a verb, to *muff* a catch=to fumble or drop it, and as a noun used in mild abuse of someone who so *muffed* a catch. The first of these uses may be said to be still current, but cricketers certainly never call each other *muffs* nowadays.

From the cricketing uses of the word sprang many wider applications. It was possible to *muff* anything in which there was room for failure, as, for example, an examination—e.g. 'Freddy and Tommy and Dicky have all *muffed* for the Army' (which the PSWB quotes as an Etonian idiom of 1884); and *muff*, the noun, became a popular term of abuse, never very strong and sometimes even affectionate—e.g. 'a complete *muff*' (1860), 'a tremendous *muff*' (1880), 'They make *muffs* of themselves' (1884), 'You old *muff*.'

The origin of the word is uncertain: it is thought not to be connected with an earlier *muff* applied contemptuously to Germans or Swiss, and may imply the sort of fumbling which would result from keeping the hands in a muff.

See under DISAPPROVAL for synonyms of *muff* in the second sense

**mug<sup>1</sup>**: see FACE.

**mug<sup>2</sup>**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**mug<sup>3</sup>** (Winchester, WB, NB), (1) to work hard, *swot*—e.g. 'I *mugged* all the morning,' one who *mugs* being a *mugster*. This is akin to the more general colloquial use of *mug up*. See also *swat*.

(2) To beautify, bestow pains upon—e.g. 'He has *mugged* his study': evidently an extension of (1). A *bat-mugger* (PSWB) was an instrument used in oiling cricket-bats.

**muggety** (Colston's, 1887), stingy, both of the giver and the gift.

**Muke** (Eton): see GREEK.

**mull** (Christ's Hospital). see *mill*.

**mush** (Framlingham). see CROWD.

**mutt**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**muttoner** (Winchester, WB, NB), a blow on the knuckles with a cricket-ball.

**muzz** (Westminster) see *swat*.

**My Lord** (Bootham): see HEADMASTER.

**nab** (Brighton). see *cop*.

**nail** (Winchester). see *cop*.

**nailer** (Bromsgrove). see *cad*.

**nant, non nant** (Eton) see LATIN [2]

**napper**: see HEAD

**nark** (Colston's, 1887), a clever boy: the word more generally denotes a spy or police informer.

For synonyms, see *card*, *dab*, *jib*.

**native** (Leys, PSWB), pronounced *nahtive*: originally synonymous with *crib* (*q v.*), it later developed various meanings involving the idea of cunning—e.g. *to native* a football = to be tricky with it. *Native* as an adjective = clever: *nativity* was also current. The origin of the expression is probably now lost, but it may have had something to do with the phrase 'native wit,' either in the sense of cunning, or sarcastically, what you rely on (i.e. a *crib*) when you have not prepared your work.

**Naws** (Colston's). see EXCLAMATIONS.

**neb, nose**: see *boko*, *conk*.

**neck<sup>1</sup>** (Forest): see *tuck*.

**neck<sup>2</sup>**: see *cheek*

**nestor** (Winchester, PSWB, c. 1840), a boy over eighteen; alternatively, one who was old for his position in the school, or who was known to be older than he looked.

**neuf** (Rossall): see **NEW BOY**.

**nevvv** (Tonbridge, 1885+), a master's favourite. implying an avuncular demeanour on the part of the master. See *pip*. Also=nephew (see *people*)

**NEW BOY**. The terms applied to new boys are generally most uncomplimentary—e.g. *new brat*, *new squirt*, *new tick*, *new bug* (Charterhouse, 1915+, St Bees, 1915+), *new scum* (Shrewsbury, 1938), each of which carries very offensive implications; *squealer* (Wellington, 1915+); *prep pest* (Rossall, 1913+), an expression calculated to remove all traces of concert from any young preparatory school hero; and *fresh herring* (King Edward's, Birmingham, PSWB, 1900). In some cases the name implies nothing unpleasant—e.g. *new man* (Winchester), *new gur'nor* (Haileybury, 1923+), *newy* (Christ's Hospital, 1905+), *neuf* (Rossall, forty years ago), and *novi* (Tonbridge, 1921+). The last of these, by a regrettable perversion of grammar, is both singular and plural.

The customary ordeal through which new boys are put at most schools is generally known as the *New Boys' Concert*, but at Tonbridge it is called *Novi Singing*, and at Rugby *Lambs' Singing*, presumably from the lamb-like demeanour of the victims.

At other side to the picture is seen in the system of protection and initiation for new boys formerly established at Winchester and Westminster. In both cases the new boy was put under the tutelage of a junior, whose duty briefly was to show him the ropes. At Winchester the protector was known as *tégé* (pronounced tee-jay), or in college, *pater*; while at Westminster (c. 1849) the protector and his protégé were wittily referred to as the *substance* and the *shadow*, since the one followed the other wherever he went.

For other terminology applied to small boys, see under *fag*<sup>1</sup> and **BOY**. A discussion of the origin of *tégé* will be found under that word.

**newy**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, NEW BOY.

**nezzar** (Durham): see WOMAN.

**nib, nibby**: of considerable age in general slang as a synonym for gentleman, it had a certain limited use in schools and elsewhere before the last war with the sense of an important person, or one who looked important—e.g. 'He's a bit of a *nib*.'

See also *nut*, *swank*

**nibber** (King's, Canterbury): see *dicks*.

**nibs** (King's, Canterbury): see *dicks*.

**nick**: see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**NICKNAMES.** There are two main classes of nicknames (excluding abbreviated forms of Christian or surnames):  
1. individual nicknames, specially coined for the occasion;  
2. generic nicknames, applied to all persons who possess certain distinctive features. Only the second class can be profitably discussed here, for the first class is infinite in its extent.

In the first place it may be noted that schoolboys, like soldiers and sailors, have an extensive repertoire of universal nicknames, which are almost automatically applied when the right person comes along. Examples are: *Diwie* (applied to anyone called Dean; from a well-known footballer); *Dusty* (anyone named Miller); *Fatty*, *Ginger*, *Nobby* (any Clarke); *Taffy* (any Welshman; from Dafydd); *Tich* (applied to anyone of diminutive stature, from the comedian Little Tich).

Very often, too, a nickname earned in some way by one particular boy is passed on to others of the same name, though it may not be at all applicable to them individually. Farmer quotes several examples from King Edward's, Birmingham; *Jelly* applied to all Pearsons; *Tiddley*, *Topsy* and *Bowie*, which in each case belonged successively to several brothers; and by a refinement of the same process, *Kitten* applied to the younger brother of one nicknamed *Pussy*.

There are many nicknames which are not universal, but nevertheless remain in constant use in particular schools, with a fixed significance generally derived from some other slang expression. Examples of these may

be classified under two heads: 1. physical, 2. having reference to character. Such nicknames generally have a spice of satire about them.

- (1) **Beefy**: any *beefy* individual.

**Boker** (Aldenham, 1923+): of men with large noses (*boko*=nose)

**Bolly** (Marlborough, 1930+): fat, from the well-known steam pudding known as *bolly* (*q.v.*)

**Nippy**: of small men.

**Petty** (St Bees, 1915+): applied to diminutive, small-scale persons.

**Potty** (St Bees, 1915+): fat, from *pot*=stomach.

**Scud** (Rugby), 'Tom Brown's Schooldays': a fast runner (see *scud*)

**Slogger** (Rugby), 'Tom Brown's Schooldays': a great fighter.

**soapy**: oily in appearance and manner: see *oil*.

**Tax** (Tonbridge, 1886+). a mysterious word, applied to those with projecting or staring eyes.

**Tibby** (Aldenham, 1923+): of very small men.

- (2) **Cuddy** (St Bees, 1915+): stupid, from Scots *cuddie*=donkey: also at Christ's Hospital about 1817 applied to severe masters—e.g. *Cuddy Rice*, but this was clearly a different word (see *cud*<sup>2</sup>)

**Dinkey** (Bushey, 1907+): of hot-tempered masters, from *dink*=temper (*q.v.* under **ANGRY**)

**Dippy**: silly, lacking in common sense.

**Duffy** (Brighton, 1920+): from *duffer*.

**Gussy**: of over-dressed persons.

**Holy Joe**: pious and solemn in manner.

**Jammy** (Bushey, 1907+): applied to anyone who was continually lucky, cf. *money for jam*.

**Nabby** (Brighton, 1920+): a master good at *nabbing* offenders.

**Slicker**=slacker.

**Tecker** (Bushey, 1907+): a master who possessed the characteristics of a detective.

**Titchie** (Christ's Hospital, 1898+): used of a master too prone to use the *titch* or birch.

A patient consideration of all that every school had to offer might well extend this list into a glossary of nicknames, which again would have to be infinitely expanded. For nicknames are even more fluent than other slang, and, except for a few old favourites like *Ginger* and *Fatty*, they are constantly changing. It will be seen, however, that the principle of nickname formation remains the same.

**NICKNAMES (SCHOOL).** It seems to be rare for a school as a whole to possess a nickname, though Oxford and Cambridge colleges often have them. *C'house* is used of Charterhouse among Carthusians, and Christ's Hospital has been known as *Housey* for at least a century. Similarly, the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich is popularly called the *Shop*. Colston's School likewise is affectionately known as the *Crib*, though it remains uncertain whether this is because it is the cradle of Colstonians or because they are 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd' there; probably neither, since *crib* is an old cant word for any kind of building.

There are some examples of nicknames, generally derogatory, applied to each other by members of rival schools. When the boys of St Paul's and St Anthony's (a London school, long defunct) used to fight in the streets in the sixteenth century, according to Stow in his 'Survey of London,' they were known respectively as *pigeons* and *pigs*, the first name due to the fact that then, as now, pigeons swarmed round the cathedral, the second perhaps merely insulting. The boys at the two Christ's Hospital schools, in London and at Hertford, called each other respectively *Jackdaws* and *Hedgehogs*—that is, town birds and unkempt rustics; while the girls and boys in the two Hertford schools were known mutually as *Grasshoppers* and *Bluebottles*, probably in reference to their clothing. There must certainly have been other names of a similar kind.

**niff, nifty:** see **SMELL**.

**nig, nigshious:** see **CHRIST'S HOSPITAL**.

**nihil-ad-rem** (Winchester): see **LATIN** [4]

**nip<sup>1</sup>** (Malvern): see **cad**.

**nip**<sup>1</sup> (Forest): see *cheek*.

**nix**<sup>1</sup>: see MASTER, WARNING CRIES. .

**nix**,<sup>2</sup> nothing. German *nichts*.

**nob**: see HEAD.

**nobble**: see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**noggy** (Colston's, 1887), fat meat, which it was regarded as bad form to eat.

See also *disper*, *gag*.

**non dies** (Eton). see LATIN [2]

**NONSENSE**. Scornful expletives equivalent to 'Nonsense!' are by no means the prerogative of boys, but they are very commonly used by boys, and as such may be justifiably included here. Some of them, especially the more recent ones, may well have been invented by boys. A history of these expressions would be an interesting commentary on manners and vocabulary from century to century, as the following haphazard examples will suggest (OED dates in each case). The earliest are *Trash* (1542) and *Stuff* (1579), the first of which is in certain uses still alive, while the second was until quite recently; it is not uncommon in school stories of the last century. The still popular *Rubbish* followed (1601), then *Fudge* (*q.v.*, c 1700), *Stuff and nonsense* (1749), and *Twaddle* (1782), a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century vogue word, also used of persons. *Bosh*, which is a Turkish word, became fashionable from its frequent occurrence in a popular novel first published in 1834; *Rot* (1848) belongs to the same period. The prolific 90's are represented by *Piffle* (1890), *Tosh* (1892), and *Tripe* (1898). The first two of these were also commonly applied to feeble performance in games, *piffle* of football, *tosh* of bowling in cricket. *Tripe* had been used much earlier of persons (1595), but it is nevertheless surprising to find what seems essentially a juvenile fashion of the moment beginning as early as 1895. *Bilge*, which is now equally common, finds no place in the OED, but certainly belongs to the present century.

It will be seen that the latest and most popular words, *tripe* and *bilge*, are also the most extravagant: this is in keeping with the whole trend of modern colloquial speech,

which is ever in search of something novel and startling, and ever finds it more difficult to attain.

All the above words may (or might) also be used as nouns—e.g. 'He talks the most awful *tripe*,' 'It's absolute *bilge*,' 'Don't talk *rot*.' For exclamations pure and simple, see also EXCLAMATIONS.

**notion** (Winchester): see under WINCHESTER.

**novi** (Tonbridge): see LATIN [1], NEW BOY.

**nunky**: see *people*.

**nut**<sup>1</sup>: see HEAD.

**nut**,<sup>2</sup> **nutty**, smart, over-dressed, *swanky*: a word associated with the period immediately before 1914, when the music-hall song 'Gilbert the Filbert' was popular. It cannot be called school slang, but had a definite school vogue. The meanings of *nutty* and *natty* (=neat, spruce) were certainly confused.

See also *nib*, *swank*.

**nymph** (Haileybury): see MAID.

**oaf** (Bootham): see DISAPPROVAL.

**observator**: see PREFECT.

**officiate** (Christ's Hospital, 1905+, 1914+), to listen to or butt into a conversation unwanted. one of the senses of *officious* transferred irregularly to an existing verb, in a way not uncommon in school slang. See *fag-end*.

**oik**: see *cad*.

**oil**. This is one of the most remarkable words in school slang. Though probably quite recent in its development, it is almost universal, and grows more indispensable and more versatile day by day. The fundamental conception is one of slippery or unctuous conduct: it will be seen that one or other of these notions is involved in each of the following selection of idioms:

- (1) to oil up to someone—to try to ingratiate oneself.

Hence an oiler or oil is one who does so.

- (2) Oiler=working man (Cheltenham, 1897+): oiler=college waiter (Marlborough, 1930+). It may be noted that *cadger* has a similar double sense: see under *cad*.

- (3) **to oil out of** an engagement=to avoid it by means of excuses or otherwise unfairly. Hence at Winchester (NB) oil=an evasion, and **to oil**=to avoid, or more specifically, to cut games.
- (4) **to oil in**=to obtain admission unfairly or join a group uninvited (Oundle, 1930+): one may even say, in asking permission to join a group, 'May I oil?'
- (5) **to oil in front**, in a queue=to take a prior position unfairly (Oundle, 1930+): see also *bile, bung*,<sup>2</sup> *clap, fudge*.
- (6) **to do an oil**=to effect any manœuvre involving *oily* methods.
- (7) **to oil**=to cheat (Rugby, 1926+), or obtain unfairly—e.g. *to oil* a scholarship.
- (8) **to oil**=to take culprits by surprise (Stonyhurst, 1930+). Hence **oiler**=a rubber-soled shoe.

There are doubtless many other refinements of the original metaphor in current use, and more are being created from day to day. These idioms seem to belong mainly to the period following 1914. An earlier equivalent was *slime*, at one time widely used of various forms of slippery conduct, such as cutting games, moving about stealthily, or slacking—e.g. *to slime about* ('He *slimes about* in carpet slippers—the beast': Vachell, 'The Hill,' 1905, a Harrow novel); *to do a slime*=*to do an oil* above; *to slime down town*=to lounge, slack. *Slime* was also used at Harrow of certain cunning shots at racquets. The PSWB gives *slum* as an equivalent at Derby School: this may possibly be a variant of *slime*, but is more likely derived from the practice of slipping down back streets—i.e. slums—to avoid detection.

A similar metaphor is involved in certain uses of *groise* (=grease)

- (1) **to groise**=to curry favour (Cheltenham, 1928+): hence a **groiser**=one who does so.
- (2) **groize** (Uppingham, 1930+)=one who is over-efficient—e.g. a **corps groize** is one who tries to **gain** favour by his efficiency in the O.T.C.

- (8) **groise**=unnecessarily hard work or *swot* (Harrow, 1906+), the implication being that working hard is merely a way of ingratiating oneself with the authorities.

At Haileybury *groise* is actually used of grease. The obsolete Bootham *greaser*=apology is a further cynical development of the same notion. Bootham also had *soap*=1. to curry favour, and as a noun, 2. to *swot*.

For similar conceptions expressed through different metaphors, see *galley*, *ram*, *suck*.

**oips** (Haileybury): see GREEK.

**old man**: see *people*.

**Olive oil** (=au revoir): see GOOD-BYE.

**on**. Certain school idioms employ *on* where *in* would be more natural in standard English—e.g. *on* the team, *on* the First XI (which is probably a regular North Country usage and certainly not confined to schools), *on* the Upper Fourth (Christ's Hospital, 1914+), *on* the School House (St Bees, 1915+)

**on-and-off** (Tonbridge): see DRINK.

**oof**: see MONEY.

**oppidan** (Eton): see LATIN [2]

**orderly** (Cheltenham): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**ostiarius** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**Othello**: see CAKE.

**OUNDLE**: see

*cheese*

*cock* (*cheek*)

*dykes* (LAVATORIES)

*fag end*

*goof*, *goop* (DISAPPROVAL)

*guff* (*cheek*)

*ha'dee* (MONEY)

*jank* (*cheek*)

*oil in* (*oil* [4], [5])

*park* (*throw*)

*shack off* (*row*)

*tack on*

*throw*

*waft* (DISAPPROVAL)

**outer** (Colston's, Durham): see *cad*.

**outside-left** (Lancing): see CAKE.

**ovule** (Bootham): see DISAPPROVAL.

**owl** (Christ's Hospital): see HIT.

**ox up** (Christ's Hospital): see PROMOTION.

**pantiles**: see PUDDING.

**pard, perd** (Kingswood): see *cad*.

**park** (Oundle), as a colourless verb: see *throw*.

**parting** (Christ's Hospital): see FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF.

**passy**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

**pater**: see LATIN [1], *people*. For the Winchester use = protector, see NEW BOY.

**pave**: see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**pax**<sup>1</sup>: see LATIN [1]

**pax**<sup>2</sup> (Winchester, WB), an intimate friend. Wrench in the WB conjecturally identifies this with *pack*, intimate, thick, and quotes Burns 'Unco *pack* and thick thegither.'

**paxy**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**peach**: see *sneak*.

**pec** (Eton): see LATIN [1]

**peck**: see *tuck*

**peevd**: see ANGRY.

**pempe** (Winchester, PSWB). By way of practical joke new boys (so it is said) were on occasion sent to ask someone for a *pempe*. This consisted of a piece of paper inscribed *πέμπε τὸν μῦθον προτέρῳ* (=Send the fool further). On receiving it, the victim was told to present it to someone else, who naturally carried out the instructions contained in it, and so on till the jest grew stale. This is only a more scholarly version of a type of joke once popular in many forms—e.g. a boy might be sent for a *penn'orth of nothing with nobs on*, or some *strap-oil* (=a beating)

**penal** (Shrewsbury): see IMPOSITION.

**penance** (Stonyhurst): see PUNISHMENTS (various) [3]

**people**. In speaking of his family a boy nowadays almost always says *my people*. the expression has become good colloquial and even literary English. A Harrow anecdote relating to about the year 1884, however, shows that this was not always so. According to this story a small boy approached his house-master and said that So-and-so's *people* were waiting outside and would like to see him. The status of the word was such that the house-master could pretend ignorance of its meaning, and after cross-questioning the boy to find out what he

meant, reprimanded him for introducing slang and caused him to copy out a column of *populus* from a Latin dictionary to impress upon him the real meaning of the word. Even a judge could scarcely plead ignorance of *people* in its slang sense today.

There are few equivalents, but at Colston's (1887) *friends* was used to include even parents, clearly a euphemism designed to ease the always embarrassing situation of having one's parents present at school. Winchester has the unusual *pitch-up* (see *pitch-up* for a full discussion).

Individual members of the family possess certain distinctive appellations. Mother and father are still and have long been *mater* and *pater*: the usage should date from the time when Latin was spoken in school, but the earliest dates recorded by the OED for the two words are 1864 and 1728 respectively. Winchester had a parallel pair in *frater* and *soror*, brother and sister, not recorded from any other school. *The Governor* was once very popular for father, but now seems defunct: the *Old Man* was also used. *Nunky* and *nevy*, uncle and nephew, are quoted by Wrench's WB as current before 1901 at Winchester. they are certainly now obsolete. *The young 'un* was once the correct designation for a young brother, but the modern equivalent is possibly *my bro*: Bootham (1925) used *the brat*, as some other schools used *the kid*.

**petty**: see FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF.

**phiz, phizog**: see FACE.

**piccaninny** (Leys): see CAKE.

**pickle** (Leatherhead, 1924+): used as a verb to express the nervous feeling which precedes some important occasion, such as an interview with the Headmaster—e.g. 'I bet he's *pickling*.' The metaphor seems to be drawn from the nursery.

**pick-up** (Allhallows): see *cad*.

**picnic** (Bootham): see PUNISHMENTS (various) [2]

**piffle**: see NONSENSE. Also at one time used as a verb, of feeble or inefficient play in football—e.g. '*piffing* in front of goal.'

**pig**: see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**pigeon** (St Paul's): see NICKNAMES (SCHOOL)

**piggy-wiggy-wagtail** (Framlingham): see *montakitty*.

**pig-swill**: see DRINK.

**pike**: see *Bags*, *TUROW*.

**pin** (Stonyhurst, PSWB, obs.), enjoy—e.g. 'I *pinned* my innings' *pinning*=enjoyable—e.g. 'This is a *pinning* book': also *pinnable*—e.g. 'a downright enjoyable *pinnable* game' ('Stonyhurst Magazine,' 1887)

**pinch**: see *bag*,<sup>2</sup> *cop*.

**pink** (Bootham) see *cop*

**pint** (Rossall): see *BOY*.

**pintle** (Lancing, PSWB, 1937), cricket played with a narrow bat (also called a *pintle*), a soft ball, and using a stone as a wicket. From the fact that *pintle-slinger* meant a fast bowler it would seem that fast bowling was usual in this game. As now played, *pintle* is much the same as *stump-cricket* (*q v.*) elsewhere. See also *snob*.

**pip** (Bushey, 1907+), a master's favourite. See *nevvv*.

**pipes** (Bootham, 1925) *to take pipes*=to tickle vigorously in the region of the stomach. *pipes* referring presumably to the intestines. It is strange that such a procedure should need a special descriptive phrase

**pip-pip**: see GOODBYE.

**pit** (Lancing, 1938), a study. hence also a boy who possesses a study.

**pitch-up** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. a circle of friends, 2. one's relations, 3. a crowd. *to pitch up with*=to associate with. The noun uses are evidently derived from the verbal phrase. Of them (2) is the commonest, and is even given official recognition in the School Rules—e.g. 'No leave will be given to have meals in Winchester hotels or shops unless boys are with *pitch-up*.' See also *people*

**plant** (Winchester, WB), to hit with a football—e.g. 'I *planted* him': also as a noun. The word is still current in connection with Winchester football, and is defined as follows in the rules (1929): 'If a player intercepts the ball after it has been kicked by an opponent, and before

it has touched the ground, he is said to receive a *plant*.<sup>7</sup> See *cut off*: and for other Winchester football terms, *bust*, *canvas*, *hot*, *tag*,<sup>1</sup> *worms*.

**plate** (Cheltenham): see MONEY.

**playground** (Bootham): see PUDDING.

**pleb** (Westminster): see LATIN [3]

**pledge** (Winchester, WB), to give, lend—e.g. 'I'll *pledge* it when I've done with it.'

**Pledge you** (Winchester, WB), an exclamation=Pass me, Lend me, Give me, Give me the reversion of—e.g. '*Pledge you sines*' (= 'Pass me the bread'), '*Pledge you some dubs*' (= 'Lend me some money') This mysterious and now obsolete expression must surely be taken as the imperative of *pledge* above, with a pronoun, as occasionally in local idiom—e.g. 'Come you here,' rather than, as Wrench supposes, an abbreviation of 'I pledge you.'

**plough, pluck**: to fail in an examination, both of the candidate (e.g. 'Jones *ploughed* in Smalls') and of the examiner (e.g. 'I expect they'll *plough* him'). Of these two synonyms, *pluck*, now almost obsolete, is much the older. Both originated in the universities. A university student in the first instance might be *plucked*, or rejected for any reason. This was the sense borne by the word at the beginning of the eighteenth century: for example, a fellow of Jesus in 1721 was *plucked* 'for mentioning the word king in his declaration.' Later it came to be used only of failure in examinations. The word is supposed to derive from an old custom whereby anyone who objected to the recipient of a degree might pluck the sleeve of the Proctor to signify the fact. *Plough*, perhaps merely a corrupted pronunciation of *pluck*, came into use in the middle of the last century. It occurs in 'Verdant Green' (1853), and ten years later was described by Reade in 'Hard Cash' as 'the new Oxfordian for *pluck*.' It now holds the field, and *pluck* is unknown to the younger generation.

See *bowl*, *floor*, *gravel*, *muff*. and for the more limited sense of a master refusing a boy's work (in which sense *plough* and *pluck* were used at Winchester, PSWB), see also *bottle*, *cropple*, *ship*, *turn*.

**plucky** (Malvern): see BULLY.

**plug**: see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**plum** (Lancing, 1938), law-abiding and unenterprising.

**Pluto** (Bideford G.S.): see LATIN [3], MAN SERVANT.

**POCKLINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL**: see

*dib down (dicks)*

*Salt* (EXCLAMATIONS)

*fugster (fug)*

*sweat*

*gym. fug (fug)*

*tubing (suck)*

**poena** (Eton): see IMPOSITION, LATIN [2]

**pog** (Felsted): see FACE.

**pole** (Marlborough): see CANE.

**poll**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**polloi** (Cheltenham): see GREEK.

**polly** (Uppingham): see PREFECT.

**pong**: see SMELL.

**Pontines** (Rugby): see LATIN [3]

**pony**: see *crib*.<sup>1</sup>

**poon**<sup>1</sup> (Dulwich): see DISAPPROVAL.

**poon**<sup>2</sup> (Winchester, WB, NB), noun and verb, to prop—e.g. a piece of furniture. Wrench says in the WB that originally it meant to be unsteady, and that you propped the leg which *pooned*.

**poop** (Tonbridge): see BULLY.

**Pop**<sup>1</sup> (Eton): see LATIN [2]

**pop**<sup>2</sup> (Christ's Hospital): see BELLY.

**pop**<sup>3</sup>: see DRINK.

**poser** (Eton, Westminster, Winchester, etc.), examiner: with the alternative forms *apposer* and *opposer*, the word was widely used from the time of Chaucer onwards, but probably did not survive beyond the seventeenth century outside the schools and universities. It is still current at Winchester.

**posh**, smart, well-dressed—e.g. 'You look awfully posh' also as a verb—e.g. 'He's *poshed* himself up,' 'All *poshed up*' The word came in with the last war, and had a great vogue with the younger generation, which has not entirely died down.

**post te** (Charterhouse): 'The most useful of all the old Charterhouse expressions' (Tod, 'Charterhouse,' 1900). It was in use when the school was situated in Charterhouse Square (which it left in 1872) and still continues. There are a number of senses on record, the connection between which is difficult to establish. The following is an attempt at a semantic order.

- (1) after you: the literal meaning of the Latin; used for example at meals, and possibly dating from the time when Latin was the official school language.
- (2) an extension of (1), as in Tod's example, '*Post te math ex*' = 'Will you have the goodness to permit me to glance over your mathematical exercise,' otherwise in modern idiom, 'After you with your maths exercise.'
- (3) to give someone a *post te* of anything (Tod)—e.g. to give a friend a *post te* of a book—to give him the right to use it when you have done with it.
- (4) as an adjective expressing disapproval—e.g. a *post te* hat, a *post te* chum (Tod); evidently an extension of (3) by some such transition as this: finished with, rejected, unwanted, disapproved of in general.
- (5) taboo (1915+)—e.g. 'It is *post te* to do that,' addressed to anyone perpetrating a breach of the unwritten law: a further extension of the notion of disapproval in (4)
- (6) privilege (1920+)—i.e. that which is taboo to the majority but permitted to a select minority.

The above may be a possible line of development from the original sense of 'after you' to the seemingly quite different 'taboo' and 'privilege.'

For further remarks on the notions involved in (5) and (6), see under PRIVILEGE. See also LATIN.

**postor** (= *praepostor*): see PREFECT.

**Pot**<sup>1</sup> (Cheltenham): see HEADMASTER.

**pot**<sup>2</sup>: see IMPOSITION.

**pot**,<sup>3</sup> **pot-ache**, **potty**: see BELLY.

**pot-funk** (Cheltenham): see *funk*.

**Potts** (King's, Canterbury): see **MAN SERVANT**.

**potty**, easy.

**praepostor**: see **LATIN** [2], **PREFECT**.

**prag** (Leighton Park): see **GREEK**, **IMPOSITION**.

**preces** (Winchester, NB), prayers, from **LATIN** (*q.v.*), with the barbarous verb to *preke* Charterhouse (1874+) used the same word pronounced and popularly spelt *precies*

See also *cramps*, *dicks*.

**PREFECT**. Boys who occupy posts of special responsibility are now generally called *Prefects* (abbreviated to *pre*), but this has not always been the most favoured title. In fact, *Prefect* only dates from 1865 in this sense. *Praepostor* (abbreviated *postor*), which is familiar to readers of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' seems to be the earliest term. It is used by Skelton (1518), who wrote:

'I am Goddys Preposytour: I prynt them with a pen;  
Because of theyr neglygence and theyr wanton vagys',

implying that one of a *praepostor's* duties even then was to take the names of offenders. Only one year later (1519) comes a reference from Winchester—'I am *prepostor* of my boke, *duco classem*'—in the *Vulgaria* or phrase book, of the headmaster of the day. The word continued in general use till near the end of the nineteenth century, but now seems almost obsolete except for certain special uses. At Winchester it is said to have been superseded by *prefect* towards the end of the eighteenth century, but survived in a formula used in asking for *remedies* (=holidays). Something of the same kind occurred at Eton, where there are now no *prefects* (school discipline being in the hands of the Sixth and members of Pop), but the title of *Praepostor* is given to a Sixth Form boy on duty daily to fetch offenders and attend canings. Rugby has given up the word altogether: the Sixth are the *prefects* and each is known individually as a *sixth*. *Monitor* also has been in continuous use since the sixteenth century (earliest date 1546), and is still very general, sometimes denoting a rank inferior to *prefect*. For some reason it is often the word adopted by those who are engaged in introducing the prefect system into

new schools or new types of schools. Earlier synonyms, now quite defunct, were *observer*, recorded as equivalent to 'monitor, bill-keeper in schools,' in a dictionary of 1611, and *impositor* (Sherborne, fifteenth century)

The following are a few slang words corresponding to these technicalities:

**beak** (Bradfield, 1918+): more generally applied to masters.

**fug** (Marlborough, 1930+): see under *fug* for a possible explanation.

**jout** (Bromsgrove, of some age): origin obscure.

**polly** (Uppingham): conceivably formed by treating *police* (=polhes) as a plural.

**reeve** (Bootham): evidently due to the historical researches of someone, a reeve being the prefect or fiscal officer of a shire.

**prep pest** (Rossall): see NEW BOY.

**prig** (Warwick): see *bag*<sup>2</sup>.

**prime**: see APPROVAL.

**primus**: see LATIN [1], *major*.

**privee** (Charterhouse): see *boulee* under GREEK.

**PRIVILEGE-TABOO.** These notions, generally associated with primitive tribesmen, in reality play a most important part in the lives of public school boys. In every school there are a number of things which persons of a certain standing may do, but others may not. For example, at Eton members of Pop may walk arm-in-arm with each other or with non-members, sit on the Long Wall, walk in front of the common herd at football matches, and wear button-holes and patent-leather boots: at Rugby only *swells* may walk on one side of a certain road: at Charterhouse (1920+) the *bloods* might leave undone certain buttons, walk four abreast in the middle of the road, or wear coloured socks: at St Bees (1915+) only the Sixth Form might put their hands in their pockets in a certain way: at Haileybury (1923+) only boys who had been in the school for at least a year might wear their caps on the back of the head. Such examples might be multiplied indefinitely. Thus the same thing is simultaneously a privilege for a minority and taboo for

the majority, and the same word does duty for both. *Post te* (q.v.) at Charterhouse (1915+) meant both a taboo and a privilege. *Swagger* at Harrow (PSWB) could be both legitimate in a *blood* and forbidden in the case of others. *Side* at Haileybury (1923+) meant a legitimate privilege, whereas normally it means conceit—i.e. the assumption of illicit privileges. *Spree* at Winchester was used of activities permissible only to privileged persons (a *spree-man* being a boy with certain specific privileges), and also in an opposite sense, with vituperative force, of impudent, *cheeky* conduct in junior boys; the latter sense now prevails.

For a further consideration of words applicable to conceit and breaches of the unwritten law, see *swank* for older boys, *cheek* for younger boys. Other relevant matter will be found under *blood*.

**prog** (Forest): see *tuck*.

**PROMOTION.** Most commonly known as a *budge* (otherwise a move), a *double budge* or *double* (Eton, 1930+) being a double promotion. Winchester, however, has *ferk up* (WB) and also *ferk down* for the opposite process, known since the last war in some quarters as *demotion*. If a boy at Winchester fails to be *ferked up*, he may be *hotted up* or promoted specially by the headmaster, in which case he is said to *raise a hot-up*. Christ's Hospital in the 40's had a somewhat similar idiom *knock up*, which was used in the London school, the Hertford equivalent being *ox up*: another Christ's Hospital expression was *mob* (PSWB). It may be noted that all these expressions imply a certain amount of violence (a *hot* being a *mêlée* or *scrum* in Winchester football), as if promotion were no easy matter for the majority; but perhaps this may be a coincidence.

Rugby has a special word for *demotion* which belongs to a different category: the boy to whom this happened (1917+) was said to be *speckled*, the explanation being that speckled black and white straw hats were at one time worn by all except the Sixth, so that a boy degraded from the Sixth would have to assume the speckled hat once more.

See *ferk* for a full discussion of this curious word.

**proxime accessit:** see LATIN [2]

**pruff** (Winchester, WB, NB), tough, insensible to pain: a corrupted pronunciation of *proof*, used as in Shakespeare's 'hearts more *proof* than shields.'

**PUDDING.** A peculiarly revolting form of humour seems at times to be inspired in small boys by the subject of pudding. The supreme example of this is *cats'-eyes-in-phlegm* (=sago pudding), which scarcely bears consideration, and far surpasses the commoner *frogs'-eggs*. Others of the same type are: *boiled baby* (=roly-poly: Colston's, 1917+), *maggots-in-milk* (=rice pudding), *pup-in-a-blanket* (=roly-poly) and *quiddle* (=custard: Bootham, 1925): the full suggestiveness of the last is only apparent to those who are aware that at Bootham *quiddle* (q.v.) also means spit.

Humour of a rather more pedestrian kind has gone to the making of hundreds of expressions such as: *jambricks* (=baked jam roll: Christ's Hospital, 1910+); *putty-and-varnish* (=suet roll and treacle. Framlingham, 1899+); *greasy-endies* (=the ends of jam rolls: Christ's Hospital, 1909+); *spotted dick*, *dog or duff*; *stiff dick*; *slosh* (=boiled rice: Christ's Hospital, 1909+), *pantiles* (PSWB, general), *Cæsar's bricks* (Framlingham, 1899+), *playground* (Bootham, 1925), *flatty* (St Bees, 1915+) and *stally* (Colston's, 1897), all denoting various kinds of jam tart. Of the same type is the Marlborough *bolly* (q.v.)

Expressions such as these are easily coined and easily forgotten. Some of them, like *spotted dick*, have gained a wider circulation, but generally speaking they do not last. On the other hand, they are constantly being renewed, for puddings must have names, and, in the matter of food especially, schoolboy humour must find an outlet.

See also BREAD, CAKE.

**puke:** see *cat*.

**puker** (Shrewsbury): see DISAPPROVAL.

**pumsey** (Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol): see ANGEY.

**pun, pun of, pun out:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, *sneak*.

**PUNISHMENT** (various). The two main types of corporal punishment are discussed under **BIRCH** and **CANE** (see also *bibler* for a Winchester variety), while punishment which takes the form of writing is dealt with under **IMPOSITION**. Here are grouped a number of miscellaneous punishments, which do not readily come under any of these heads. They may be subdivided into (1) corporal punishment other than birching or caning, (2) punishment by imprisonment or detention, (3) punishment of a psychological rather than physical kind, often the most unpleasant and ferocious of all.

(1) **brushing** (Rugby, 1926+), castigation with a butter-pat. cf. *brush*=birch.

**Dove's food** (Eastbourne, 1925+), corporal punishment with a gym. shoe; from the wording on the box in which the headmaster kept the fatal shoe.

**ferula**: in the sixteenth century a flat piece of wood like a ruler, widening at one end into a circular shape, which was sometimes pierced with holes to raise blisters: applied to the hand.

**hander** (Westminster, c. 1840), striking the back of the hand with a rod (this being more painful) it might involve anything from three strokes (a *three-cutter*) to seven strokes (a *seven-cutter*).

**shaving** (Harrow, c. 1880), a series of glancing blows applied to the person by means of a racket.

**tighting** (Kingswood), beating with a slipper, after the preliminary command 'Bend tight': cf. *tight-breechings* at Christ's Hospital, which, according to Blanch, were the speciality of a certain Rev. Nathaniel Keymer, who would draw the victim's trousers tight before flogging him.

It will be noted that some of the above are both administered and accepted in a semi-jocular spirit, and these are on the increase.

(2) Genuine imprisonment was probably usual in boarding schools till the end of the eighteenth century.

When Charles Lamb arrived at Christ's Hospital as a new boy he was at once taken to see the dungeons

'These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison orifice at the top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who might not speak to him.'

Later the punishment became much less rigorous. At Shrewsbury, for example, a little over a century ago, boys were locked in a dark room known as the *Black Hole*, but they were never (except accidentally) left there for long.

Another primitive way of detaining boys was by means of fetters. Such was the punishment known as *clog-and-collar* at Christ's Hospital about 1730, described in 'The Fortunate Bluecoat Boy' (1770) by an Orphanotrophian:

'The first was a broad ring or strap of iron locked round the leg, with a small chain and log of wood affixed to it, as the criminals in Bridewell. The second was a strap of iron locked round the neck with an iron ascending from it with a crane neck, at the end of which hung a bell, which, as they walked along, always rung, unless, as was generally the case, they stopped it.'

After such barbarities the modern detention seems very tame. It has inspired little slang. There are abbreviations such as *D.T.* or *dct.*, ephemeral attempts at humour like the Bootham (1925) *picnic*, and sometimes also borrowings from the slang of thieves—e.g. *clank*, *twang*.

(3) Punishments intended to reach tenderer regions than any birch or cane can reach were once popular, but are now severely frowned upon. Such were standing on the form or in the corner, with or without a dunce's hat in each case. Others of the same kind are:

**desking** (Westminster: described in Airey's 'Westminster,' 1902): a punishment imposed upon boys too old to be *tanned*, which required the offender to remain in his desk except for meals, etc., without

speaking to anyone for several days, until he had expiated his offence.

**penance** (Stonyhurst, PSWB): there was a *penance table* and a *penance wall*, where offenders were forced to take their meals and their exercise in silent isolation, if condemned to *go on penance*.

**sending to Coventry**: exclusion from every kind of social intercourse: the expression is still well known, but the process never occurs except perhaps in girls' schools (or in school stories).

**standing on** (Christ's Hospital, 1914+): the offender in this case had to stand in the day-room during his spare time, in one position, without moving or speaking to anyone.

**standing under the nail** (Winchester): a punishment for a boy who told a lie, who was required to stand in a certain conspicuous position, designated by the phrase *under the nail*, during school hours, and afterwards to receive a flogging.

**yellow-hammer** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840): a refinement of the dunce's hat punishment: the victim had to wear his coat inside out with the yellow lining visible, when he was known among his fellows as a *yellow-hammer*.

**punt** (Malvern): see KICK.

**pup-in-a-blanket**: see PUDDING.

**puppy-hole, p-hole** (Eton), pupil-room, where boys work with their tutors. an abbreviation not without wit.

**pur-** (Colston's, 1887), a prefix=passably—e.g. *pur-good, pur-fair*. It may perhaps be a corruption or misuse of *per-* or *par-*, as in *par-boiled*.

**purl** (Winchester, WB, NB), verb and noun, dive: cf. the common slang *purler*=a severe fall.

**putrid**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**putty-and-varnish** (Framlingham): see PUDDING.

**Q.E.D.**: see LATIN [2]

**QUEEN ELIZABETH'S HOSPITAL, BRISTOL**: see

*bucked* (*buck* [8])

*gunge*

*pumsey* (ANGRY)

**quid**: see MONEY.

**quiddle** (Bootham, 1925), 1. spit; hence, by a metaphor both apt and repulsive, 2. custard.

See PUDDING: also *cockle*, *clope*, *gob*, *gosh*, *hoik* for other words meaning spit.

**quill** (Winchester): see *suck*.

**quinner** (Colston's, 1887), a stone.

**quirister** (Winchester, WB, NB), chorister: it is a survival of a once common spelling.

**quis**: see LATIN [1], [4]

**rabbiter** (Winchester): see HIT.

**rabble** (Bootham): see *rag*.

**rag**. Originally the word implied fraying the temper, and seems to have had merely a local or dialect use, but it was well established in general slang during the second half of the last century. More recently still it has found a special place in school and university slang, where it has proved indispensable, covering as it does a wide variety of meanings to which no other single word is equal. Its principal uses may be classified as follows:

(1) As a transitive verb:

- (a) to **rag** someone—e.g. another boy or (generally) a master: this may imply anything from mild and friendly banter to practical joke. Cf. an early, and perhaps transitional, idiom, *to get someone's rag out* = to make them angry, now probably obsolete.
- (b) to **rag** a room, a bed, a desk, etc.: to throw it into confusion, in order to score off the owner.
- (c) to **rag** a tune: to syncopate it, or otherwise treat it in such a way as to ridicule or caricature it. Cf. *rag-time*.

(2) As an intransitive verb:

- (a) to **rag**, to **rag** about—to fool, to be funny—e.g. 'He's only *ragging*'—i.e. 'He isn't serious,' 'He doesn't really mean it.'

## (3) As a noun:

- (a) a **rag** at the universities, a piece of organized fooling, often on a large scale, not directed against anyone in particular, which may take the form of sitting on the pavement, holding a mock funeral, releasing rats in thousands in the main shopping centre, conducting a street battle with fish-heads and soot, etc. *Rags* at school are similar, but on a much smaller scale—e.g. putting carbide in the ink-pots, riding into prep. on a bicycle, and always at the expense of some (presumably incompetent) master or prefect.

- (b) **rag**=fun—e.g. 'What a *rag*!' 'Some *rag*!'

Before the appearance of *rag* the field was only partially covered by existing words, somewhat as follows:

- (1) (a) **chaff**, **hoax** ('Tom Brown's Schooldays'), which are not slang: tease, equally not slang: **rot**, **kid**, **cod**.  
 (b) **to row** a room ('Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,' 1803): **to ship** a study or a bed (see under **BULLY**): **to wreck** a room or a desk.  
 (c) No comparable usage.  
 (2) (a) **rot**, **kid**, **cod**: **rot round**.  
 (3) (a) **hoax**, **spree**, **lark**, etc., but no real equivalent.  
 (b) **lark**—e.g. 'What a *lark*!' 'We shall have lots of *lark*' ('St Winfred's,' 1862), the second usage now obsolete.

A few schools have their own synonyms, roughly equivalent to *rag* in the senses (2) (a) and (3) (a)—e.g. *mill* (Shrewsbury: see also **FIGHT**), *mob* (Eton, 1919+), *rabble* (Bootham, 1925).

The distinction between *ragging*—usage (1) (a)—and bullying is sometimes ill-defined, though *ragging* is generally more subtle and bullying more brutal. See under **BULLY**.

**raise** (Winchester, NB), 1. to obtain—e.g. *to raise books*=to win a prize; 2. to make angry. The first of

these senses is one which became popular everywhere during the war, and probably neither is exclusively a Wykehamism. With the second may perhaps be connected a Westminster expression, *real razor*, a defiant or quarrelsome boy, quoted by Partridge in 'Slang Today and Yesterday': if so, *raiser* is the spelling.

**ram** (Shrewsbury, 1938). This word fulfils at Shrewsbury some of the functions elsewhere entrusted to *oil* (*q.v.*), violence instead of smoothness, however, forming the basis of the metaphor. The following idioms are current:

- (1) **to ram on, ram in** = to get one's name on the list for an expedition or something else desirable.
- (2) **to ram off** a punishment = to get off or avoid it.
- (3) **to ram out** = to appropriate someone else's place: see *bile, bung*,<sup>2</sup> *clap, fudge*.
- (4) **to ram a fives court** = to exercise the right of displacing others.
- (5) **to ram for a boat** = to apply for a boat.

As a noun *ram* denotes a crowd or crush (see *crowd* for synonyms)

**ramrod** (Winchester, WB, NB), at cricket, a fast ball along the ground. The word appears to be descriptive, but is everywhere explained as a corruption of *Raymonder*, from a player named Raymond, who bowled in this way.

See also *barter, lob*.<sup>1</sup>

**rat, ratty**: see *ANGRY*.

**rattled**: see *ANGRY*.

**rattling**: see *APPROVAL*.

**rears**: see *LAVATORIES*.

**redder** (Lancing, 1938): *to score a redder* = to blush. See *blow, hunt, toast*.

**reduce** (Shrewsbury, 1938), to take down a peg.

**reeve** (Bootham): see *PREFECT*.

**REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL**: see *fainites (fen)*

**remedy** (Winchester), **remi** (Westminster): see *LATIN* [2]

**Remove**: see *FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF*.

**riled**: see *ANGRY*.

- rimp** (Christ's Hospital): see GREEK.  
**ripper, ripping**: see APPROVAL.  
**rock** (Winchester, WB), a stone, however small.  
**roke** (Winchester, WB, NB), to stir a liquid, poke the fire, etc : *roker* = poker. It is probably a genuine variant of *rake*, and not a mere schoolboy mispronunciation.  
**rook**: see *jew*.  
**roost** (Derby): see KICK.  
**root**: see KICK.  
**rorker, rork** (Tonbridge): see *cad*.  
**rort** (Lancing, 1938), to shout: the spelling should perhaps be *wraught*.

**ROSSALL**: see

*Bin* (HEADMASTER)  
*blot* (*blub*)  
*bully*  
*digs* (*dicks*)  
*gunz*  
*hoi* (GREEK)  
*lose* (ANGRY)  
*mary* (MAID)

*Nag off* (*Shut up*)  
*neuf* (NEW BOY)  
*pint* (BOY)  
*prep pest* (NEW BOY)  
*rouge*  
*scanty* (BREAD [1])  
*stub* (KICK)  
*tolly*<sup>2</sup>

**rot**<sup>1</sup>: see NONSENSE.

**rot**<sup>2</sup>: see *rag*.

**rotten**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**rotter**: see *cad*.

**rouge** (Eton, Rossall), also at one time spelt *rooge* or *ruge*. The word now denotes a mode of scoring by touching the ball down: (1) in the Eton Field Game, where the player who scores is closely backed up by the *bully* (= *scrum*); (2) in Rossall hockey, the ball in this case being touched down with the stick. (Rossall must have borrowed both word and action from Eton.) Early uses of the word, however, suggest that it was once equivalent to *scrum* (hence, no doubt, its association with the *bully* at Eton). Kinglake in his 'Crimea' (1863) writes: 'He wedged his cob into the thick of the crowd—the *rooge* he would have called it in his old Eton idiom of speech'; and 'Punch' in 1875 spoke of a *rouge* in the House of Commons, meaning a scrimmage. It seems to have been

so used also at Charterhouse: and at Felsted (PSWB), after becoming obsolete in connection with football, it continued in use as a synonym for *rag* or *scrag*. One is thus inclined to equate it with the other terms denoting a *scrum*: see *bully*, *grovel*, *gutter*,<sup>1</sup> *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *squash*.<sup>2</sup>

The origin of *rouge* is extremely obscure. There is said to be a Cornish dialect word *rouge*, to handle roughly, but if this is its source, how came it to Eton? Perhaps it ought rather to be connected with a word *rouge*, of which only one instance is recorded, in a play of 1612, where it seems to mean hustle: 'I am so valorous that I dare rate/And *rouge* ten sergeants at the counter-gate.'

**row.** A useful word, with several shades of meaning:

- (1) a noise, uproar—e.g. 'What's all the *row* about?'  
'Don't kick up such a *row*.'
- (2) trouble—e.g. *to get into a row*: 'You'll get into an awful *row* if you're caught.'
- (3) an official enquiry, followed by strong measures—e.g. 'There'll be a *row* about this tomorrow.'
- (4) as a verb, to shout at, abuse, reprimand—e.g. 'What are you *rowing* me for?': perhaps hardly a school usage now, though it occurs in 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's.'

Synonyms may be grouped in the same way:

- (1) *din*, *shindy*: earlier perhaps, *dust*, *shine*.
- (2) no school equivalent: *hot water* is now rather adult jocularly.
- (3) *dyke* or *dike* (Colston's, 1887)—e.g. 'a stone-throwing *dyke*.'
- (4) *jaw* (*q.v.*): *juice*, (Bootham, 1925; see under *blub*); *strafe*, borrowed from German during the last war, and once common in many connections, but now probably obsolescent; *shack off* (Oundle, 1930+); *tell off*, *tick off*, both wartime idioms of 1914-1918, now fairly established.

For *rowing a room* see under *rag*.

**rowsterer** (Derby): see *cad*.

**roy** (Christ's Hospital): see *cad*.

**rubbish**: see NONSENSE.

**RUGBY.** Partridge in his 'Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English' says of Rugby slang that its only remarkable feature is the -ER SUFFIX (*q.v.*). The statement might well be made of Harrow slang, but few words in -er are recorded from Rugby, and there are none in the glossary in Hardy's 'Rugby' (1911). In fact, Rugby seems to have very little that is of conspicuous interest, though it has a number of slang words of its own.

See.

<i>Bidge, Bodger</i> (HEAD-MASTER)	<i>Jerry</i> (MAN SERVANT)
<i>Bilham</i> (MAN SERVANT)	<i>Joe</i> (MAN SERVANT)
<i>bindle</i>	<i>levy</i>
<i>black</i>	<i>loather</i> ( <i>cad</i> )
<i>blag, blog, blug</i> ( <i>cad</i> , MAN SERVANT)	<i>lout</i> ( <i>cad</i> )
<i>Bogle</i> (MAN SERVANT)	<i>oil</i> ( <i>oil</i> [7])
<i>boob</i> (DISAPPROVAL)	<i>Pontines</i> (LATIN [3])
<i>buck</i> ( <i>blood</i> )	<i>potted fug</i> ( <i>fug</i> )
<i>Buggins</i> (MAN SERVANT)	<i>sappy</i> (CANE)
<i>cut</i>	<i>school</i>
<i>dics</i> ( <i>dicks</i> )	<i>scud</i>
<i>dish</i> ( <i>lick</i> )	<i>speckle</i> (PROMOTION)
<i>floor</i>	<i>stodge</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>fug out</i> ( <i>fug</i> )	<i>tick</i> <sup>3</sup>
<i>gowk</i> (DISAPPROVAL)	<i>tolly</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>have over</i> (CANE)	<i>topos</i> (GREEK, LAVATORIES)
	<i>tosh</i> <sup>2</sup>

**EUN.** There is no real need for a synonym for such a short and simple word, but school slang characteristically possesses quite a number—e.g.:

**cut**—e.g. 'Cut down town': very common at one time, but now somewhat unnatural: see *cut*.

**hare**—e.g. to *hare* along, or in the command 'Hare off'

**leg** (Forest, 1920+)

**scoot** (Forest, 1920+)

**tap** (St Lawrence, 1919+)—e.g. as a rendering of 'He girded up his loins and ran'—'He hitched up his bags and *tapped*.'

**toll** (Winchester, NB): *to toll abs* = to run away.

**tow** (Shrewsbury): in use throughout the nineteenth century, especially of hare-and-hounds, but possibly to be associated in origin with running on the tow-path.

**track** (Warwick, 1930+)

**trek** (Durham, PSWB)

**waas, wass** (Uppingham, 1913+): also of hurrying and vigorous exercise generally.

To run away is to *bunk off*, *buzz off*, *clear off*, *clear out*, *cut off* (no longer possible), *hoof it*, *hook it*, *hop it*, *slope off*, *scoot off*, etc., according to local or periodic fashion. See also *micky off*. Such idioms are most often heard as commands, in which form they carry considerable force, though in this respect they are certainly being outclassed by Americanisms such as *Beat it*, *Scram*, etc., which are finding a place in schools.

See also *scud*.

**run**. At Eton a class which is allowed to go if the master fails to appear is said to *take a run*. At Rugby (1917+) the equivalent is *to get a cut*, at Winchester (NB) *to raise a shirk* (see *cut*, *shirk*).

**rush**: see *bag*,<sup>2</sup> *crib*,<sup>1</sup> *jew*.

**rux** (Bradfield): see *KICK*.

**sack**: see *bunk*.

**ST BEES**: see

*belly-go-round*

*bint* (ARMY SLANG,  
WOMAN)

*bumpious* (*cheek*)

*cock up* (CANE)

*commugger* (COMMUNION)

*Cork* (*Shut up*)

*dippy* (DISAPPROVAL)

*flatty* (PUDDING)

*gammy*

*gob*

*gutty* (*gut*)

*hypo*

*leg-zeph*

*micky off*

*mike*

*minge*

*montakitty*

*shed*

*shots* (CANE)

*simp* (DISAPPROVAL)

*skinny liz* (WOMAN)

*snot*

*wimp* (WOMAN)

## ST EDMUND'S, CANTERBURY: see

<i>dummet</i> (MAID)	<i>seet</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>Guv'nor</i> (HEADMASTER)	<i>snotter</i> ( <i>snot</i> )
<i>leer</i>	

## ST LAWRENCE'S, RAMSGATE: see

<i>asspeece</i>	<i>tap</i> (RUN)
<i>fug-pipes</i> ( <i>fug</i> )	

ST PAUL'S: see *pigeon* (NICKNAMES [SCHOOL])

## Salt (Pocklington G.S.): see EXCLAMATIONS.

*sans* (Bootham, 1925), 1. worthless, 2. nothing—e.g. 'He jumped into the Ouse *sans* on.' Though it is possible that this comes direct from French *sans* (=without), it is more probably inspired by Shakespeare's '*Sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* taste, *sans* everything.'

For other French, see *asspeece*, *skee*.

*sap*,<sup>1</sup> *sappy*: see DISAPPROVAL.*sap*<sup>2</sup> (Eton, etc.): see LATIN [1], *swat*.*sappy* (Rugby, Durham): see CANE.

*sark* (Sherborne, PSWB), *sulk*: originally perhaps an abbreviation of *sarcastic* (which gives the adj. *sarky* in use elsewhere), and transferred from one display of an unpleasant temper to another.

*sass* (Uppingham): see *cheek*.*sat*: see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>*sawny*: see DISAPPROVAL.*scabby*: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.*scadger* (Winchester, WB, obs), a rascal.

*scaff*, *scaffy* (Christ's Hospital): see *cad*, CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

*Scaldings* (Winchester): see EXCLAMATIONS.*scale on* (Shrewsbury, 1938), to treat with sarcasm.*scaly*: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.*scanty* (Rossall): see BREAD [1]*scheme* (Colston's): see *cut*.

*scheme out* (Colston's, 1897), to break bounds: see also *mike*, *shirk out*, *skulk out*.

*schitt* (Winchester): see *worms*.

*school*.<sup>1</sup> Most schools possess what is called a *Big School*, generally used as a kind of assembly hall, or sub-

divided into classrooms. This is in most cases a survival, in fact or in name, from the days when the school consisted of one great room, in which all the different classes were conducted together. The expression *Top Schools*, in use at Shrewsbury, Friars' School, Bangor and elsewhere, recalls a period in the history of these schools when there were two schoolrooms, an upper and a lower. At Rugby the word *school* is still used to denote any form-room, and there are also an *Old Big* and a *New Big* (school omitted), which are large classrooms. Probably the same sense survives in various uses of *schools* (in the plural) to denote a single building, as the Divinity Schools at Oxford, and New Schools, Music Schools, Mathematical Schools, etc., at Eton.

**school<sup>3</sup>** (Harrow): *to give a school*=to grant a period off.

**sci, ski, sky** (Westminster): see LATIN [3]

**sconce** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. as a verb, to get in the way, especially in games—e.g. 'If you hadn't *sconced*, I should have got a *flyer* (=kick)'; 2. as a noun, applied to a boy, presumably implying one who gets in the way—e.g. 'A damn'd little *sconce*' (a marginal note in the statutes of 1780), also recorded from Christ's Hospital (PSWB)=a selfish fellow; 3. to deprive—e.g. 'He was *sconced* leave-out,' a usage also current in the universities. Only 1. and 3. are recorded in the current NB.

The earliest meaning of *sconce*, a fortress or defence-work—that is, something which got in the way and impeded the enemy—accounts for 1. and 2., but 3. is difficult to connect with this sense, and still more so is the current university use of *sconce*=to impose a forfeit of beer, etc., for a breach of table etiquette.

**scoot**: see RUN.

**scorchy**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**scourge** (Winchester): see CANE.

**scouring** (Winchester): see *bibler*.

**scoway**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**scrag** (Shrewsbury, 1938), to scratch an event or an entry: elsewhere alternative to *scratch* in certain other senses.

**Scram**: see RUN, *Shut up*.

**scrap**: see *mill*.

**scrape**: see BREAD [4]

**scratch**<sup>1</sup> (Christ's Hospital): see MAID.

**scratch**<sup>2</sup> (Warwick): see BREAD [4]

**scrigger** (Christ's Hospital): see -ER SUFFIX.

**scrub**<sup>1</sup> (Christ's Hospital). in general a small boy (see under BOY), but it has various implications. The following is a series of definitions by Old Blues of different periods: 'a new or very junior boy' (1876+), 'an untidy person' (1898+), 'a dirty boy' (1905+), 'a small and/or untidy boy' (1910+), 'one who appeared in public with a button undone or off' (1923+). In any case the expression, like most of those applied to small boys, is not complimentary.

**scrub**<sup>2</sup> (Christ's Hospital). see LATIN [1]

**scrubbing** (Winchester): see *bibler*: **scrubbing-forms**: see BIRCH.

**scrummy-handed** (Colston's, 1887), left-handed=*caggy-handed* (Tettenhall, 1890+)

**scrumptious, scrummy**: see APPROVAL.

**scud** (Rugby, c. 1840). Readers of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' will remember that Tom's friend East was nicknamed *Scud* because of his speed, and those who did well at *hare-and-hounds* were known as 'first-rate *scuds*.' The usage appears to be a survival (or revival) of an earlier idiom: Ben Jonson in one of his plays has 'O how she *scudded*' O sweet *scud*, how she tripped!'

**scuff** (Brighton, 1920+), to dress quickly: cf. *scuffle*.

**scug** (Eton). Like the Christ's Hospital *scrub* (*q.v.*), which it resembles, *scug* carries various implications. The 'Eton Glossary' (1923) says that it should properly denote a boy who has no Colours (hence *scug-cap*, worn by boys who are not entitled to any other kind of cap), but adds that it has become a general term of abuse, denoting the sort of person who would under no circumstances have a Colour (hence the adjective *scuggish*—e.g. 'Beastly *scuggish* thing to do'). An Etonian at school 1895+ defines it as 'a boy not distinguished at games and/or untidy, unwashed and generally unpopular.' The word is not unknown to the general public, and is said to have

been once current at Harrow, but it nevertheless remains characteristically Etonian. See DISAPPROVAL.

**scum** (Shrewsbury): see *fag*,<sup>1</sup> NEW BOY.

**scuttle** (Christ's Hospital): see *sneak*.

**secundus**: see LATIN [1], *major*.

**seet** (St Edmund's, Canterbury): see DISAPPROVAL.

**semper** (Winchester): see LATIN [1]

**Send, Send me** (Bootham): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**send up** (Harrow). a master may *send up* a boy—i.e. to the Headmaster—either for some offence or for some particularly good piece of work: the former is the more generally accepted meaning, perhaps because it is commoner, hence *send up* at one time became a euphemism for *birch* (see *BIRCH*)

**senior**: see LATIN [1], *major*.

**serve, service** (Bootham). see IMPOSITION.

**servitor** (Eton): see LATIN [2]

**session** (Tettenhall). see *lick*.

**shack, to go shack** (Felsted) see *dib*.

**shack off** (Oundle): see *row*.

**shag** (Christ's Hospital) see *dib*.

**shants** (Felsted). see LAVATORIES.

**shark** (Forest): see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**shaving** (Harrow): see PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**she** (Charterhouse): see CAKE.

**shed** (St Bees, 1915+), chapel. The word must have originally been satire (certainly unjustified), but came to be used as a normal synonym in all circumstances—e.g. 'Time to go to *shed*.'

**Shell**: see FORMS, NOMENCLATURE OF.

**shell out**: see *fork out*.

**SHERBORNE**: see

*blood*

*bottle*

*bubble (blub)*

*Chief* (HEADMASTER)

*dobs (dicks)*

*dome, doom* (DORMITORY)

*dribbler* (DISAPPROVAL)

*gob*

*grovel*

*sark*

*ship*

**shift**, move, in all contexts: equivalent to *budge* (q.v.)

**shug** (Winchester): see MONEY.

**shin** (Eton): see KICK.

**shindy, shine**: see row.

**ship**, 1. at Shrewsbury (from c. 1880) a boy is *shipped* if a master refuses to accept his work: *shipment*=imposition. 2. at Sherborne (PSWB) *shipping* meant turning a boy's bed upside down over him when asleep, or, more generally, dragging a boy out of bed, clothes and all: later it was used of wrecking a boy's study. See BULLY, rag.

In both senses we are to understand *shipwreck*. Curiously enough another nautical idiom, *launch*, was once (c. 1815) widely used in the second sense.

For 1. see also *bottle, bowl, cropple, floor, plough, skew turn*.

**shirk**. Apart from the normal usage of the word, there are a number of interesting idioms peculiar to schools:

- (1) **to shirk** a master (Eton, 1865)=to avoid him in the High Street, which was out of bounds, by hiding in a shop or elsewhere till the coast was clear: this became obsolete when the High Street was put in bounds.
- (2) **to shirk** a master (Shrewsbury, c. 1880), to avoid recognition by a master, when boating illegally, by pulling the jacket over the head.
- (3) **to shirk out** (Winchester, WB), to break bounds.
- (4) **to shirk** (Winchester, NB), to go to places which are *non-licet*—e.g. *to shirk up town*.
- (5) **to shirk in** (Winchester, WB), to walk into the water when bathing, instead of boldly plunging in.
- (6) **to raise a shirk** (Winchester, NB): a form left without a master *raises a shirk*, is allowed to go, if he does not turn up within a specified time: see run.
- (7) **shirkster** (Winchester, WB), one who shirked in any sense, a shirker.

See also *cut, fluke*.

**shirt, shirty**: see ANGRY.

**shot**: *to have a shot*=to have a try, to make an attempt

of any conceivable kind, but originally of shooting and marksmanship generally—e.g. ‘Have a *shot* at goal.’ ‘He’s having a *shot* at a Balliol scholarship.’ ‘Let me have a *shot*,’ ‘Good *shot*.’ A less common equivalent is *to have a stab*.

**shots** (St Bees): see **CANE**.

**shouting cake** (Stonyhurst): see **CAKE**.

**SHREWSBURY** is well provided with slang, both general and particular, and among the latter class are several words of special interest, notably *doul*, *skyte* and *slay*. The subject is dealt with, expressly or incidentally, in most histories of the school: but special use has here been made of a list of Salopian slang expressions provided through the kindness of the school librarian, Mr. J. B. Oldham, who formed a committee of boys to collect the current slang of today. See:

<i>bags</i>	<i>nobble</i> ( <i>bag</i> <sup>2</sup> )
<i>beano</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>penal</i> (IMPOSITION)
<i>Black Hole</i> (PUNISHMENT)	<i>postor</i> (CANE)
[various] [1])	<i>puker</i> (DISAPPROVAL)
<i>cab</i> ( <i>crib</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>ram</i>
<i>corps-fug</i> ( <i>fug</i> )	<i>reduce</i>
<i>corps-sap</i> ( <i>swat</i> )	<i>sap</i> ( <i>swat</i> )
<i>digs</i> ( <i>dicks</i> )	<i>scale on</i>
<i>doul</i>	<i>scrag</i>
<i>doulos</i>	<i>scum</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )
<i>dowlings</i>	<i>ship</i> [1]
<i>early digs</i> (COMMUNION)	<i>shirk</i> [2]
<i>firm</i> ( <i>find</i> )	<i>skyte</i>
<i>gat</i>	<i>slay</i>
<i>grimmer</i>	<i>snob</i> ( <i>cad</i> , DAY BOY)
<i>grip</i> ( <i>bag</i> , <sup>2</sup> <i>cop</i> )	<i>snook</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>grip on</i>	<i>squash</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>Hare-and-Hounds</i>	<i>swot</i> (ANGRY)
<i>ink-boy</i> ( <i>fag</i> <sup>1</sup> )	<i>toast</i>
<i>jew-sap</i> ( <i>swat</i> )	<i>tow</i> (RUN)
<i>Joyce-sap</i> ( <i>swat</i> )	<i>tweak</i> ( <i>blood</i> )
<i>lift</i> ( <i>swank</i> )	<i>twirp</i> , <i>twirt</i> ( <i>cheek</i> )
<i>mill</i>	<i>willy</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>muck</i> [2]	

**shuffle** (Winchester, WB), to pretend—e.g. *to shuffle* asleep, *to shuffle* continent (=to pretend to be ill): an enlargement of the ordinary usage of *shuffle* to denote dishonesty—e.g. *to shuffle* out of something. At Christ's Hospital (1905+) *shuffle* was equivalent to *cut* (q.v)

**Shuts** (Christ's Hospital): see EXCLAMATIONS.

**Shut up:** generally as a command, meaning 1. Keep quiet, 2. Stop it, both senses being now equally common. There have been many equivalents at different periods, of which the following are examples, grouped according to the two senses.

(1) **Cork** (St Bees, 1915+); **Hold your row**; **Shut it**; **Shut your jaw**; **Shut your trap**; **Stow it**; **Switch off** (Bootham, 1925)

(2) **Cheese it** (Bradfield, 1919+: see *cheese*); **Chuck it**; **Hold on**; **Lay off** (Dulwich, 1930+), **Less of it** (St Bees, 1915+); **Nag off** (Rossall, 1913+); **Off, Off the meat** (Bootham, 1925); **Scram** (Dulwich, 1930+), which is of course an Americanism (see RUN)

Most of those for which no school reference is given are taken from school novels of the last century.

**shy:** see THROW. The word is also a technicality in the Eton Wall Game, in which a player is allowed a *shy*, or throw at the goal, if he succeeds in getting the ball into a certain position in the *bully*.

**sick,**<sup>1</sup> **sickener, sickening:** see *fed-up*.

**sick:**<sup>2</sup> see *cat*.

**sick-house** (Winchester, WB), sanatorium, infirmary.

**side**<sup>1</sup>: see PRIVILEGE-TABOO, *swank*.

**side**<sup>2</sup> (Cheltenham): see IMPOSITION.

**simon** (King Edward's, Birmingham): see CANE.

**simp** (St Bees): see DISAPPROVAL.

**sine** (Eton): see LATIN [4]

**sines** (Winchester): see BREAD [1]

**sink** (Lcys, PSWB), 1. a feast or hearty meal, 2. a glutton. The metaphor involved may be one of two things, implying either that the glutton takes on enough

cargo to sink him, or that he is a sink into which anything and everything may be poured.

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *grub*, *gut*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**sit out** (Lancing, 1938), to be absent from school=*stay out* at Eton and *stop out* at Harrow: also to work unsupervised during school hours.

**sixes, to go sixes** (Harrow): see *dib*.

**skee** (Westminster: quoted in Forshall's 'Westminster School,' 1884), jolly. This was obsolete in 1884, but Forshall derives it tentatively and not very convincingly from French *exquis*, and concludes that boys must have heard their sisters exclaim '*C'est exquis*,' this being their only way of becoming acquainted with French words.

For other possible French, see *asspeece*, *sans*.

**skew** (Harrow). As a noun this denotes an entrance examination held at the end of term, the opposite of the *dab* (*q.v.*), which is held at the beginning. As a verb it means 1. to fail in anything (1887), 2. transitively, of a master, to refuse a boy's work (1906+). All are connected with one of the ordinary uses of *skew*, to turn aside. The examination called the *skew* must thus be an occasion when many, or the majority, are turned aside and get no further.

Synonymous with the verb *skew* in its second sense are *bottle*, *bowl*, *cropple*, *floor*, *ship*, *turn* (*q.v.*)

**ski** (Westminster): see LATIN [3]

**skiff** (Christ's Hospital, 1909+), to upset or spill anything from food to a boy running—e.g. '*Skiff* that fellow': also of cleaning the remains, called *skiff* or *skiffage*, from plates into a tin.

**skinny liz** (St Bees): see WOMAN.

**skitters, squitters**: diarrhoea.

**skiv, skivvy**: see MAID.

**skulk out** (Christ's Hospital, 1923+), to break bounds: see also *mike*, *scheme out*, *shirk out*.

**skunk** (Bedales): see *cut*.

**sky** (Harrow), originally 1. to hit into the air—e.g. in cricket: then 2. to hit or throw anything away: later 3. to

hit or hurt—e.g. ‘He’s *skied* himself’: hence **4.**, in Harrow football, to charge or knock down.

**sky-blue** (Christ’s Hospital): see **DRINK**.

**skyte** (Shrewsbury, c. 1830+), day boy. Salopians claim this as a word of Greek origin, from *Σκυθίς*, Scythian, barbarian, hence outsider, much as the Westminster *sci* or *ski* (q.v.) is derived from *Volsci*. *Skyte* or *skute*, however, has other less dignified senses in general slang, which connect it with *squirt*, and it seems more likely that one of these was contemptuously applied to the Shrewsbury day boys. The use of the word at Shrewsbury goes back at least a century.

For synonyms, see under **DAY BOY**.

**slave-driver** (Harrow): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**slay** (Shrewsbury), sometimes, but wrongly, spelt *sleigh*, an exclusively Salopian term, which now denotes any kind of festive supper—e.g. *Choir Slay*, *Bumpers’ Slay* (after bumping races). The original *slay*, however, was the *Hounds’ Slay* at the end of the cross-country running season conducted by the Royal Shrewsbury School Hunt (of which particulars will be found under *Hare-and-Hounds*). It is generally explained as denoting the slaying of the fatted calf, but might equally well perhaps symbolize the slaying and eating of the fox (for the Shrewsbury Hunt had *foxes* instead of the usual *hares*).

**slick** (Eton): see **KICK**.

**slime**: see *oil*.

**slop** (Christ’s Hospital): see **DISAPPROVAL**.

**slope**: see **RUN**.

**slosh** (Christ’s Hospital): see **PUDDING**.

**slum** (Derby): see *oil*.

**SMELL**. Some forceful synonym is generally preferred to the simple word—e.g. *hum*, *niff* (adj. *niffy*), *pong*, *stink*, *whiff* (adj. *whiffy*).

**smug**: see *swat*.

**smut**, indecent talk—e.g. *to talk smut*: adj. *smutty*—e.g. ‘a *smutty* story.’

**snaffle** (Forest): see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**snagger** (Clifton) see *cad*.

**snarky**: see ANGRY.

**sneak**. The word is applied among small boys to anyone suspected of mean or underhand conduct—it is essentially a small-boy word today. This use is quite venerable; it occurs, for example, in Disraeli's 'Vivian Grey' (1826), and is common in mid-nineteenth-century school novels. Hence *sneaker*, a delivery in cricket which travels along the ground; *sneaking*, off-side play in the Eton Field Game; and *sneakers*, rubber-soled shoes which enable the wearer to steal unawares upon offenders: in all these cases the name stresses the essential meanness of the action. As a verb *sneak* also means steal, in a rather mild sense—e.g. 'Who's *sneaked* my shoes?', which is one of its oldest and best-known general slang uses, though there was no mildness about *sneaking* in Elizabethan days (see *bag*<sup>2</sup>). Another more limited meaning applied to *sneak* in school slang is that of tell-tale or tale-bearer—e.g. 'He's gone and *sneaked*': here again the word belongs rather to the speech of small boys, and is perhaps obsolete in the public schools, where tale-bearing is a very rare occurrence today. The same applies to the various synonyms for *sneak* in this sense, which must now be examined.

Three were in general use—namely *blab*, *peach*, and *split*—all borrowed originally from criminals, and now familiar to everyone, though perhaps rare in schools. When Tom Brown was roasted by the bullies till he fainted and had to be put to bed, the first question was 'Did he *peach*?' *Blab* and *split* are likewise common in school stories of this period. A curious equivalent recorded as in general use about 1900 (PSWB) is *clipe*.

Christ's Hospital in the 40's had its own expression, *pun out*—e.g. 'I'll *pun out*,' 'I'll *pun you out*'—with the Hertford equivalent *pun* or *pun of*—e.g. 'I'll *pun of you*.' Only a very small boy could be imagined threatening today in the manner of these examples, which are taken from Blanch's 'Bluecoat Boy.' (*Pun* is probably an abbreviation of *punish*.) A *pun-cat* was a tale-bearer. On one day in the year *pun-cats* were given full licence to do their worst, the situation being expressed in a current

rhyme: 'The second of May is *pun-cat* day.' Christ's Hospital also about this period had the verb *scuttle*, meaning to cry out under oppression in order to attract the attention of someone in authority, with *scuttle-cat*, one who did so.

**snicks**, to go snicks (Winchester) see *dib*.

**snip**, a certainty—e.g. 'He's a *dead snip* for the prize': cf. the common abbreviation *cert.*—e.g. *a dead cert.*

**snitch**,<sup>1</sup> nose also as a nickname, *Snitch*, for boys or masters with prominent noses. Hence *snitch-rag* (Christ's Hospital, 1909+)=handkerchief.

As a verb it should mean to hit on the nose, but at Derby (PSWB) it meant to hit in the eye, and at Malvern (1902+) actually to cane (see *CANE*)

**snitch**<sup>2</sup> as a term of contempt (see under *DISAPPROVAL*) does not appear to be connected with these usages.

See also *snook*, *snot*.

**snitch**<sup>3</sup> (Cheltenham), steal: see *bag*.<sup>2</sup>

**snob** (Marlborough, 1897+; PSWB): a form of cricket associated with Marlborough, but played elsewhere, of which the following is an account by a Marlburian who left in 1897:

'*Snob* cricket was played with a string-lined ball on an asphalt pitch in spare moments. The game was open to anyone, the bowlers lining up in a sort of queue. The bat was a stick and the successful bowler was next in. If the batsman was caught the catcher went in, or if he wished he could nominate the next batsman in reply to shouts of "Your innings, sir?"'

The name probably dates from a time when *snob* meant a lower-class person (see *cad*), or more specifically a day boy (*q.v.*), because the village boys played cricket of this kind. cf. *Gownboy cricket* (*q.v.*) at Charterhouse.

See also *pinle*, *stump-cricket*, *tip-and-run*.

**snoke** (Durham) see *cad*.

**snook**<sup>1</sup> (Shrewsbury, PSWB), 1. to do the whole of an examination; 2. to defeat in argument: possibly implying the notion of scoring off examiner or opponent, and to be connected with *snook* below.

**snook**<sup>2</sup>: to *cock* (1702) or more usually today to *pull a snook* (=nose), to make a gesture of derision by applying the thumb to the nose and extending the fingers. The custom seems to be one of venerable antiquity and low origin: known also (but not in schools) as *taking a sight*, *working the coffee-mill*, *taking a grinder*, *pulling bacon*, *making a long nose* and *making Queen Anne's fan*. Some of these (e.g. *working the coffee-mill*, *taking a grinder*) imply movement of the fingers as well. Emphasis may be added to the gesture by using both the hands.

**snout**, nasal mucus: cf. *snout*. Hence *snotter* (St Edmund's, Canterbury, 1870+), *snot-rag* (St Bees, 1915+)=handkerchief.

See also *snitch*.<sup>1</sup>

**soap** (Bootham): see *oil*, *swat*.

**socius** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**sock**<sup>1</sup>: a distinctively Etonian word, which may be either a noun (=tuck at other schools) or a verb (= [a] to eat, [b] to treat someone to food). One of the oldest uses, however, dated by Farmer from 1550 and still current, is in the sense of give—e.g. 'I'll *sock* you some broadrule'='I'll give you some writing-paper' (Stone, 'Eton Glossary'); 'My governor has *socked* me a book' (quoted in an article in 'Macmillan's Magazine,' 1889); '*Sock* me a construe.'

The word is probably to be connected with *suck*; but there is an amusing attempt to produce a more dignified derivation in 'Seven Years at Eton: 1857-1864,' by James Brinsley-Richards, who writes

'I am rather disposed to the theory that at the beginning of this century one of the men who sold fruit and tarts got nicknamed Socks in consequence of his having discarded knee-breeches and stockings in favour of pants and short hose. The man's nickname might then have spread to his business and to his wares by a process familiar to etymologists, till *socking* came to mean the purchase of good things, not from Socks only, but from any other vendor.'

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *grub*, *gut*, *snk*, *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**sock**<sup>2</sup> (Winchester, WB), 1. to hit hard at cricket (obs. c. 1900), 2. to win, defeat: hence to hit in a general sense (see under HIT)

**soft, softy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**sog**: see MONEY.

**So long**: see GOOD-BYE.

**soppy**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**soror** (Winchester): see LATIN [1], *people*.

**spadge** (Christ's Hospital): see LATIN [8]

**spadger**, a sparrow: also *spug* and *spuggy*. All these words are, or have been, in fairly general use. Christ's Hospital (1908—) used *cockspike*.

**spec** (Winchester, WB), a good thing (=speculation): but *on spec*=in consequence—e.g. 'What a *spec*! My *pitch-up* (=family) have turned up, and I've got leave-out *on spec*.' The first use is certainly not confined to Winchester: *on spec* is current elsewhere, but with a different meaning.

**speckle** (Rugby): see PROMOTION.

**speg** (Winchester, WB, obs.), smart.

**spess** (Felsted) see DISAPPROVAL.

**spew**: see *cat*.

**spiffing**: see APPROVAL.

**splice** (Winchester). see THROW.

**split**: see *sneak*.

**sport** (Winchester, WB, NB). Like *throw*, *keep* and *park* today (see *throw*), *sport* was at one time a word of elastic and indeterminate meaning. A writer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' in 1794 complains of the abuse of the word at Cambridge, where it had evidently become an obsession.

'They *sported* knowing and they *sported* ignorant—they *sported* an Egrotat, and they *sported* a new coat—they *sported* an Exeat, they *sported* a Dormiat.'

Farmer, in his 'Dictionary of Slang' (1905), records many similar uses: to *sport* (=drive) a *gig*, to *sport* new togs, to *sport* *ivory* (=to grin), to *sport* (=show) temper, to *sport* *oak* or *timber*, more recently to *sport one's oak* (at the university, to close one's door to discourage callers), to *sport* (=provide) a dinner, to *sport literature* (=to

write a book), to *sport* (=spend) money, to *sport* an opinion, to *sport a nescio* (=to pretend ignorance), to *sport silk* (=to ride in a race), to *sport* (=indulge in) smoking, walking, etc.

Winchester, however, claims the word as its own, and four main senses are given in the 1930 NB, some of them corresponding with various of the usages above: 1. to display or wear; 2. to stand, provide, give; 3. to *sport mugging*=to help a *man* (=boy) with his work; 4. to *sport a lne*=to walk with more than one companion.

The connection with the ordinary meaning of *sport* seems to lie in the notion of showing off or displaying sportively.

**spot** (Winchester, NB), 1. as verb and noun, guess, evidently from the common colloquial use of *spot*; 2. to *spot oneself*=to be conceited (see *swank*)

**spotted dick, dog, duff**: see PUDDING.

**spree** (Winchester): see *cheek*, PRIVILEGE-TABOO.

**spud, potato**: also *frart* (Christ's Hospital, PSWB), and *taff* (Christ's Hospital, some houses, 1909+)

**spug, spuggy**: see *spadger*.

**square**: see HAT.

**square round** (Winchester, WB), to make room—e.g. 'Square round there.'

**squash**,<sup>1</sup> a form of racquets played with a soft ball. The word is Harrow's chief contribution to the English language. Originally used as a slang term to distinguish the soft ball used in this game from the hard ball (called *harder* at Harrow) used in racquets proper, it has now been universally adopted as a technicality. *Squash* racquets was invented at Harrow, where it was first played in a natural court containing such hazards as a window, buttresses and water-pipes.

**squash**,<sup>2</sup> the equivalent of *scrum* in Rugby football at Cheltenham, and formerly at Harrow, Stonyhurst, Shrewsbury, Charterhouse, and elsewhere. Indeed, it seems to have been in general use c 1850: a definition of 1857 gives the meaning as 'a large collection of boys, about twenty, with the football in the midst of them'—this being, of course, before the formal *scrum* had been

developed, and before Rugby and Association football had become distinct. Thus the game played at Charterhouse (when the school was situated in London) consisted, according to the Rev. G. S. Davies in 'Charterhouse in London,' of 'a series of *squashes* or dead blocks, in which the ball was entirely lost to sight . . . often for as much as half an hour at a time': and till the introduction of Association football in 1877, the Shrewsbury game also had *squashes*, which seem to have combined the functions of line-out and *scrum*.

See also *bully*, *grovel*, *gutter*,<sup>1</sup> *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *rouge*.

**squashed flies**: see CAKE.

**Squats** (Denstone). see EXCLAMATIONS.

**squealer** (Wellington): see NEW BOY.

**squeezer** (Denstone): see DRINK.

**squiffy**: see *wonky*.

**squint**, look—e.g. 'Give us a *squint*': much more rarely as a verb—e.g. 'Go and *squint* at him, and see if he's all right.' See *dekk*o.

**squirm, squirt, squat**: see BOY, DISAPPROVAL, NEW BOY.

**stab**: see *shot*.

**stally** (Colston's). see PUDDING.

**standing on** (Christ's Hospital): see PUNISHMENT (various) [3]

**standing under the nail** (Winchester): see PUNISHMENT (various) [3]

**stay out** (Eton). A boy *stays out* when he is absent from school=*sit out* at Lancing and *stop out* at Harrow.

**stew** (Stonyhurst): see *swat*.

**sticking** (Charterhouse, 1920+), confirmation. The implication appears to be that the process is one of sticking a boy to the Church, causing him to adhere permanently. See under COMMUNION and *tax* for similar irreverence.

**stiff**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**stiff dick**: see PUDDING.

**stink**: see SMELL.

**stinker**: see -ER SUFFIX.

**stivvy** (Bootham, 1925), a maid: *stivvy blug* or *Stivvy's blag* (obs., 1925), a boot-boy: as a verb (1917+), *stivvy*=

forage, *sciounge*. It is tempting to regard the word as a mere variant of the common *skivvy* (see MAID); but *Stivvy's blag* appears to represent *Stevenson's blag*, a *blag* being a boy who is not a member of the school (see under *cad*). If this is correct, the application of *stivvy* to maids is a confusion due to its similarity to *skivvy*.

**stizzle** (Tonbridge): see CANE.

**stodge**<sup>1</sup> (Rugby). The word does duty as several different parts of speech, and has five main uses:

- (1) as a noun=meal, feast—e.g. 'He was having a jolly good *stodge*,' 'He's got a *fag-stodge* on.'
- (2) as a noun=food—e.g. 'I've got a box of *stodge*.'
- (3) as a transitive verb=feed—e.g. 'He's *stodging* his *fags*.'
- (4) as an intransitive verb=eat—e.g. 'He was *stodging* away in his study.'

It is also used on occasion of certain particularly *stodgy* food—e.g. the crumb of new bread (Charterhouse, PSWB) or heavy puddings. *Stodger* (Charterhouse and Tonbridge, PSWB) was a penny bun.

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *grub*, *gut*, *sink*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*, *victual*.

**stodge**<sup>2</sup> (Tonbridge, 1882+), to hurt—e.g. 'It *stodges*': perhaps because *stodging* in the first sense above is sometimes a painful process!

**stooge** (Lancing, 1938), a select social gathering in a study: the word seems to be a portmanteau formation, with *study* as one of its elements.

**STONYHURST**: see

*atramentarius* (*fag*<sup>1</sup>)

*bonk* (*cad*)

*bunker* (*cad*)

*cob* (*cop*)

*crow* (MASTER)

*Haggory* (GREEK)

*heavy*

*oil* (*oil* [8])

*penance* (PUNISHMENT

(various) [8])

*pin*

*shouting cake* (CAKE)

*squash*<sup>2</sup>

*stew* (*swat*)

*swiz* (*crib*)

*taps* (CANE)

*tolly* (CANE, LATIN [1])

**stop out** (Harrow). If a boy does not attend school, he *stops out*: equivalent to *sit out* at Lancing and *stay out* at Eton.

**Stow** (Colston's): see WARNING CRIES.

**strafe**: see row.

**straw**, sheets—e.g. *clean straw*: claimed by both the WB and the NB as a Winchester expression, but it is by no means confined to that school (for example, it is recorded from Bootham, 1925), or indeed to schools at all.

**strengthy**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**strive** (Christ's Hospital, PSWB), to write carefully: the opposite of *scrub* (*q.v.* under LATIN [1])

**strue**=construe, translate: *construe* itself is now seldom heard.

**stub** (Rossall): see KICK.

**stuck up**: see swank.

**stuff** (Colston's): see tuck.

**Stuff, Stuff and nonsense**: see NONSENSE.

**stump-cricket**, **stumper** (Tonbridge), **stumps** (Harrow): *ex tempore* cricket, of which the following is a description by an old boy who left Tonbridge in 1903:

'We had a game called *stumper* which I have never seen played elsewhere. It was a kind of double wicket tip-and-run, coats for wickets and a short pitch, the bat a kind of short broom handle with square sides. In the long summer evenings on Saturdays scores of boys in flannels played *stumper*, and it must have been a sight. The ball was of such a nature that it had to be hit in the air to score many runs, even a dozen or more at a hit. In the Kent County Museum at Maidstone amongst the exhibits of balls used in games there is a *stumper* ball, and I believe the note "A game played at Tonbridge School." I never saw a book of rules; they would seem to have been traditional.'

See also *pinle*, *snob*, *tip-and-run*.

**stunner**, **stunning**: see APPROVAL.

**Styx** (Leys): see LATIN [3], LAVATORIES.

**substance and shadow** (Westminster): see under NEW BOY.

**suck**. The activities of the toady are generally referred to in terms of *oil* (*q.v.*) or *suck*. The latter is not confined

to schools, but finds a very wide field there. Thus a boy is said to *suck round*, if he tries to ingratiate himself, or he may *suck up to* a master. One who does so is a *sucker* (Warwick, 1930+, Brighton, 1920+), or more frankly a *bum-sucker* (Malvern, 1905+; Rossall, 1913+). At Colston's (1884+) a master's favourite was a *special suck*.

The Winchester equivalent is *quill*, which originally implied sucking through a quill, though that sense is quite forgotten. One who *quills* is a *quillster*. More recently, however, (NB) the word seems to have lost even its original Wykhamist sense, and means simply to please—e.g. 'I am *quilled*.' *To raise quills*=to be pleased is also current.

A similar metaphor is seen in the expression *tubing*, used at Pocklington (1926+) of currying favour with a master.

See also *egg*.

**Sucks:** see EXCLAMATIONS.

**super:** see APPROVAL.

**sus** (Winchester, WB, obs.), the remains of the prefects' tea passed on to their *valets*. Two glossary renderings of this old word given by Wrench are 'howndysmete' and 'hog-wash.'

**SUTTON VALENCE:** see *chuck* (BREAD [1])

**swab** (Bootham, Christ's Hospital): see *cad*, *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**swack** (Christ's Hospital): see *jew*.

**swagger:** see PRIVILEGE-TABOO.

**swank.** With *funk*, *swot*, *fag* and a few others, *swank* is very generally regarded as typical school slang. Yet it probably did not originate in schools and has certainly been in common use outside schools for eighty years or more. The OED, recording its first appearance in print, as a verb in 1809, says that the word is Bedfordshire dialect: it would be interesting to know if Bedfordshire schools were the first to introduce it into their vocabularies. It did not find its way into print as a noun till 1854, with the expression 'What a *swank* he cuts!' but today its use must be world-wide, both as a verb ('Don't *swank*!'), as a personal noun ('You *swank*!'; sometimes

*swank-pot*), and as an abstract noun ('Not so much *swank*'), with the corresponding adjective *swanky*. It must be admitted that it meets a definite need, not fully covered by the standard English conceit, ostentation, affectation, vanity, swagger and the like, which it also greatly exceeds in vituperative force.

*Side*, adjective *sidey*, is a common equivalent. A conceited person is said to *put on side*, which must originally have been a metaphor from billiards (where to *put on side*=to impart a horizontal spin to the ball). Thus at Durham (1921+) *Side off* was addressed to a boy who appeared to be *putting on side* or assuming privileges to which he was not entitled. For *side*=privilege, see under PRIVILEGE.

*Lift*, adjective *lifty* (Shrewsbury, Lancing and elsewhere), employs a different metaphor to express the same notion. *Stuck up* is also used, but less frequently now than during the last century—e.g. a boy in 'The Fifth Form at St Dominic's' calls another a *stuck-up duffer*, which would appear pedantic now. Somewhat more exclusive synonyms for *swank* as a verb are *advertise* (Marlborough, 1890+), *spot oneself* (Winchester), and *hang out* (Charterhouse, 1915+)

See also under *blood*, and for juvenile *swank* see *cheek*.

**swap, swop.** The primitive method of barter has always been popular among boys; hence this almost universal expression, which has a history going back to Middle English at least and probably to Anglo-Saxon. It has been adopted among adults as well as schoolboys because of the neatness with which it meets the situation. 'Let's *swop*,' 'I'll do you a *swop*'—compared with this, exchange and barter are incredibly clumsy, whether we are dealing with stamps, marbles, hats, or something more serious. The word may also be applied as a noun to the articles to be *swopped*—e.g. a boy may refer to his duplicate stamps as *swops*.

For a Christ's Hospital synonym, see *chaff*.<sup>1</sup>

**swat, swot.** The idea that it is bad form to work harder than necessary is probably peculiar to the English: but even the English language possessed no single word which

could express the idea appropriately until the arrival of *swot* in the middle of the last century. It is said that the word originated at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, when a Scottish professor of mathematics, William Wallace, exclaimed, 'It makes me *swot*,' meaning *sweat*. The word caught on as a synonym for mathematics among military men (a *swot* being at first a mathematician), and was later extended to all kinds of work, including the duties of *fags*. Its present meaning of work in excess of the limits laid down by good form (or a person who works in excess of those limits) is first recorded from 1860, since which date it has proved so indispensable that there is probably no schoolboy in England who does not use it today.

Some schools, however, have their own equivalents—e.g.:

**cheese** (Bradfield, 1918+)—e.g. 'Don't *cheese*': see *cheese* for discussion and other meanings.

**groise** (Harrow): see under *oil*.

**groute** (Marlborough, Cheltenham: PSWB)

**hash** (Charterhouse, 1874+, and still current): noun, *hasher*: *hash-pro*=scholarship winner—i.e. one who takes his work too professionally. *Hasher* also=the garment commonly called *sweater*, which seems to equate *hash* and *sweat*, though the origin of *hash* is obscure.

**mug** (Winchester): see *mug* for other uses.

**muzz** (Westminster, 1849+)—e.g. 'I was *muzzing* up my Vergil': evidently a variant of *mug*.

**sap** (Eton, 1827+; Shrewsbury, 1938). probably from Latin *sapiens*, rather than *sappy*=sap-headed, stupid. Shrewsbury has several idioms connected with the word—e.g. *jew-sap*=one who is unduly anxious for marks; *corps-sap*=one who is too keen on the O.T.C.; *Joyce-sap*=physical training; *to be poled* or *stiff for sap*=to be behindhand with work.

**smug** (PSWB)

**soap** (Bootham): see under *oil*.

**stew** (Stonyhurst, PSWB): a metaphor from cooking, hence *stew-pot*=one who *stews*: cf. *hash*.

**sweat** (Cheltenham, 1916+, 1928+): the original of *swot*, widely used of any hard work (e.g. 'an awful *sweat*'), but at Cheltenham in the limited sense. One who works too hard is a *sweat-gut* or *gutter* (cf. the phrase *to sweat one's guts out*): the day-room, where boys work, is the *sweat-room*. Winchester similarly uses *sweat* as synonymous with *fag* in all senses.

**sweat**, trouble, nuisance—e.g. 'It's too much *sweat*,' 'What a *sweat*', the corresponding verbal use is less common—e.g. 'Can't *sweat*' = 'Can't be bothered' (Pocklington G.S., 1926+)

For certain other special uses, see ANGRY, *fag*, *swat*.

**sweater**: now standard English for a thick woollen jersey intended to be worn by athletes, etc. after taking exercise, or during exercise to make them sweat, once university slang; cf. the Charterhouse equivalent *hasher* (*hash* = *swat* [*q v*], which originally = *sweat*)

**swell** (Eton, etc.): see *blood*.

**swine**<sup>1</sup>: see *cad*

**swine**<sup>2</sup> (Bootham) see *gut*.

**swinger** (Charterhouse) see HIT.

**swink** (Winchester, WB), 1. to sweat, 2. to work hard, but more commonly the former. The word was very commonly used everywhere till the sixteenth century, and its survival at Winchester till c. 1900 is thus particularly interesting.

**swipe**<sup>1</sup> (Marlborough, 1930+), rugger vest. see *jibber*.

**swipe**<sup>2</sup>: see BIRCH, CANE.

**swipes**: the general name for the 'attenuated small beer' (Lamb) which was once supplied to the boys in all schools: according to Lamb it was popularly supposed to be the 'washings of the brewers' aprons,' and was held in much contempt. Hence at Stonyhurst (PSWB) the boy who served the beer was known as *Swipes*. When beer was discontinued, the word *swipes* survived in some schools to denote the evening meal: thus at Harrow (1887) it meant supper, and at Wellington (1915+) it

stood for cocoa and biscuits, the modern equivalent of beer and bread.

See *bevers*, *bumble*.<sup>2</sup>

**swish**: see BIRCH, CANE. **Swishing-block**: see BIRCH.

**swiz**: see *crib*,<sup>1</sup> *jew*.

**swop**: see *swap*.

**swot**: see *swat*. For a Shrewsbury use, see ANGRY.

**tab** (Leighton Park). see DORMITORY.

**tack on** (Oundle, 1980+), to join a party uninvited: an offender was greeted with *Tack off*! See also *oil* [4]

**tachs** (Tonbridge, PSWB), a fad, eccentricity: this represents the old word *tache* or *tatch*, which has a history going back to the fourteenth century. As a verb *tachs* = to stare at, but mostly in one house only. See *hobbs*.

**taff** (Christ's Hospital, some houses, 1909+), potato: also *fratt* (Christ's Hospital, PSWB) and *spud*.

**tag**<sup>1</sup> (Winchester), an offside kick in Winchester football: as a verb, to play the ball off-side.

See also *bust*, *canvas*, *hot*,<sup>1</sup> *plant*, *worms*.

**tag**<sup>2</sup> (Harrow, 1887), a task.

**tan**: see CANE.

**tank** (King Edward's, Birmingham): see CANE.

**tanner**: see MONEY.

**tap** (St Lawrence's): see RUN.

**taps** (Stonyhurst): see CANE.

**tardy** (Eton, Winchester), late—e.g. *tardy book* at Eton, in which the names of boys late are registered, 'I was *tardy*' (Winchester)

**tart**. see WOMAN.

**tax** (Charterhouse, 1920+), collection in chapel: a crude piece of satire. See also COMMUNION, *sticking*.

**tégé**, pronounced *tee-jay* (Winchester, WB, NB), a junior appointed to look after a new boy (see under NEW BOY): also used as a verb, to protect. According to Wrench, it is a modern abbreviation of *protégé*, and thus not to be classed, as might appear at first sight, with the large group of Winchester derivations from Latin.

**tell off**: see ARMY SLANG, *row*.

**tepe** (Durham, 1921+), to smoke: from an adjoining lane, Tepe Lane, where boys no doubt secretly indulged

in smoking. The PSWB records the word as obsolete c. 1900, but it appears to have revived.

**tetra** (Felsted, PSWB, obs.), a record—e.g. *to go beyond the tetra*=to beat the record: also as an adjective=extra or the more recent *super*—e.g. *tetra-buck*=extra fine. It has been explained as a reduplicated pronunciation of *tremendous*, and also, more convincingly, as a corruption of *extra*.

**TETTENHALL COLLEGE:** see

*caggy-handed*

*cob* (*cop*)

*dog* (MASTER)

*humbug*

*session* (*lick*)

**thick:** see DISAPPROVAL.

**thoke** (Winchester, WB, NB), 1. a time of idleness, a rest—c.g. in bed; 2. as a verb, to be idle, to stay in bed. Hence *thokester*=an idler (WB, NB), and *Hatch Thoke*, a whole holiday in honour of the founder (WB, NB), when originally boys stayed in bed till breakfast, which was provided at Hatch. The connection of *thoke on*=look forward to (WB) is less obvious: possibly it implies *thoking* in advance, idling in prospect. Wrench's WB has a good sentence illustrating these idioms: 'I'm *thoking on* next week: what a *thoke* it will be, with a leave-out day, a *Hatch Thoke* and a *half-remedy*' (=half-holiday)

*Toke* (Leys, PSWB), to be idle, to loaf, is evidently a variant of *thoke*.

Like several other Winchester words, *thoke* is Anglo-Saxon in origin, and long obsolete in ordinary English: it was once used as an adjective (with the form *thokish*), meaning slothful, sluggish, and, of land lying idle, fallow.

See FALSE ETYMOLOGY for an attempt to derive it from Gieck.

**thoker** (Winchester, WB), a piece of bread soaked in water and toasted or baked in the ashes. It is not clear whether the word has any connection with *thoke* above. possibly toasting bread in this way was an occupation for idle moments. But there is also *toke*=bread (see

under **BREAD** [1]) in more general use, and some connection seems likely. A pun on the two senses of *loaf* has been suggested.

**THROW.** School slang has a number of equivalents more forceful than the plain word *throw*, some of them in general use, as *bing*, *bung*, *chuck*, *heave*, *shy*; others more narrowly restricted—e.g.:

**caulk**, **calk** or **cork** (Westminster, c. 1850: Eton, PSWB)

**pike** (Colston's, 1887): see also *pike*=choice under *Bags*.

**splice** (Winchester, WB)

**youle** (Westminster, c. 1884), to hit with a stone—e.g.

'I *youled* that dog nicely': it sounds more like the noise emitted by the dog, from which it may possibly be transferred.

See also *boss*=miss, *fluke*=a lucky shot, and *shot*.

**throw, keep, park.** These verbs (and probably others) have developed since the last war as what may be called 'blank-cheque verbs'—verbs. in themselves somewhat neutral and colourless, which take their meaning from the nouns with which they are associated (somewhat like *ago* in Latin). The motive behind such idioms is the desire to avoid the trouble of thinking and using words accurately. This is often treated as a purely post-1918 phenomenon, but *sport* was similarly used at Cambridge in the eighteenth century and has long been current at Winchester (see *sport* for details of this and its other uses). The habit probably originated in the universities (like some other manities), but has definitely established itself in the schools. Examples are

**throw: to throw** (or **fling**) **a chapel**=to go to chapel (Oxford, where almost anything might at one time be *thrown* in this way): *to throw a tea*, *a debate*, etc. (Oundle, 1927+)=to hold a tea, take part in a debate, etc.: *to throw an effish*=to be over-efficient (Uppingham, 1980+). *to throw a Jones*=to attend Mr. Jones' class (Uppingham, 1980+): *to fling a daftie*=to make a foolish remark or behave silly (Dulwich, 1980+)

**keep**: an extension of the university idiom *to keep a chapel, to keep a term*, etc.—e.g. *to keep a keen* = to appear keen: *to keep a hearty* = to behave in a hearty manner: *to keep a Smith* = to behave or look like Smith (Aldenharn, 1928+)

**park** (Oundle, 1930+): *to park a walk* = to go for a walk: *to park a bath* = to have a bath: *to park an oil* = to do something cunning or slippery

**tick**<sup>1</sup>: see *cad*, also BOY and NEW BOY.

**tick**<sup>2</sup> (Brighton): see WARNING CRIES.

**tick**<sup>3</sup> (Rugby, 1926+): *to tick a master* = to salute him with raised fore-finger.

**tick off**: see ARMY SLANG, *rot*.

**tig** (Bradford G. S.): see *tuck*.

**tight** (Winchester, WB, NB). Two senses are given in the WB and NB. 1. as an adjective = fast—e.g. 'a tight bowler'; 2. as an adverb = absolutely—e.g. *tight nailed* (=absolutely caught), 'tight junior' (not explained in WB, but apparently = very junior), or an adjective = absolute—e.g. 'tight snob,' 'tight rot,' this last use being obsolete c. 1900. The spelling here is deceptive, for this is really the Middle English word *tite*, fast, long obsolete elsewhere, and certainly a very remarkable survival at Winchester.

**tighting** (Kingswood) see PUNISHMENT (various) [1]

**tile**: see HAT

**timmy** (Colston's, 1887), a stick

**tin gloves** (Winchester): see BULLY.

**tip** (Felsted). The PSWB quotes this as current in the 90's in two senses. 1. a false report, a piece of scandal, *tip-spreading* being thus equivalent to scandal-mongering; 2. synonymous with the current *howler*, which at that time was just beginning to assume its modern sense. See *howler*.

**tip-and-run**, cricket in which the batsman must run if he touches the ball, a very popular *ex tempore* game

See *pinle*, *snob*, *stump-cricket*.

**tipping**: see APPROVAL.

**tipple** (Bootham, 1925), to disarrange a bed, which was one of the regular duties of the prefect on duty.

**tique** (Harrow, 1887), arithmetic—e.g. *tique beak* (=mathematical master): said to have originated in the pronunciation of a master who spoke of 'arithmetique.'

**tish** (Wellington): see DORMITORY.

**titch**<sup>1</sup> (Christ's Hospital). see BIRCH.

**titch**<sup>2</sup> (Cheltenham): see WARNING CRIES.

**tizzy**: see MONEY.

**toast** (Shrewsbury, 1938), to blush. See *blow*, *hunt*, *redder*.

**Toby** (Haileybury): see MAN SERVANT.

**toco**: see *lick*.

**toe** (Colston's): see KICK

**toe-fug** (Tonbridge): see *fug*.

**togs**, clothes, but now a word perhaps used rather by slangy adults than by boys.

**toke**<sup>1</sup>: see BREAD [1]

**toke**<sup>2</sup> (Leys). see *thoke*.

**toll** (Winchester): see RUN

**tolly**<sup>1</sup> candle. The word was once almost universal throughout the public schools, and is even now not altogether obsolete, though the coming of gas and electric light has made its use less common. At Harrow (1906+) *to tolly up* meant to work by candle-light after ten o'clock, an illegal practice. At Rugby (1917+) the local Roman Catholic Church was known as *Tolly Church*, because of the candles used in it, and its bells were *Tolly Bells*.

The accepted derivation is from *tallow*: cf. *yolly*=a post-chaise at Winchester, because they were yellow.

**tolly**<sup>2</sup> (Marlborough, 1897+), a tooth-mug, known as a *tolly-mug* at Rossall (1930+), where also (1913+) a *tolly-mug major* was a chamber-pot: later applied to other vessels—e.g. cups, glasses, etc. There appears to be no connection with *tolly* above, and the origin of the word is unknown.

**tolly**<sup>3</sup> (Dulwich, Stonyhurst): see CANE, LATIN [1]

## TONBRIDGE : see

<i>bumph</i> ( <i>bumph</i> )	<i>novi</i> (NEW BOY)
<i>bleacher</i> ( <i>cad</i> )	<i>on-and-off</i> (DRINK)
<i>bleed</i> ( <i>blood</i> )	<i>poop</i> (BULLY)
<i>bumph</i>	<i>rorker</i> ( <i>cad</i> )
<i>Dox</i> (HEADMASTER)	<i>stidger</i> ( <i>stodge</i> <sup>2</sup> )
<i>fag-end</i>	<i>stizzle</i> (CANE)
<i>fugger</i> ( <i>fug</i> )	<i>stodge</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>grubber</i> ( <i>grub</i> )	<i>stumper</i>
<i>gutter</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>tachs</i>
<i>hobbs</i>	<i>toe-fug</i> ( <i>fug</i> )
<i>nevvv</i>	

**tonk**: see CANE.

**tonkabout** (Charterhouse, PSWB), hitting up catches for practice at cricket: formed by analogy with *puntabout*, football practice

**Toodle-oo**: see GOOD-BYE.

**topes** (Imperial Service College): see GREEK, LAVATORIES.

**tophole**: see APPROVAL.

**topos** (Rugby): see GREEK, LAVATORIES.

**topping**: see APPROVAL.

**tosh**<sup>1</sup>: see NONSENSE

**tosh**<sup>2</sup>: bath: widely used in a variety of different ways. At Charterhouse (1875+) it is said to have been used not of the bath itself, but adjectivally—e.g. *tosh list*, *my tosh night*. At Harrow (1906+) it was applied to a small footbath, and *toshes* were also bathrooms, then just being introduced into the more up-to-date houses. An earlier Harrow generation (1887+) possessed a verb *tosh*, meaning to throw water at someone, a usage recognized by the OED, which describes *toshing* in 1888 as a kind of punishment administered by military cadets to any of their number who had become unpopular: the victim in such cases had to run the gauntlet in full uniform, while *tosh-cans* (baths holding three gallons) were emptied over him. Normally the verb *tosh* meant and still means to bath. Rugby (1926+) has *tosh-rooms* and a *Big Tosh* (=a swimming bath), and the bathing-pond at Sandhurst (1905) was the *tosh-pond*.

Some fantastic derivations have been suggested for

this word, as, for example, that it is a portinanteau contraction of *toe-wash*, or abbreviated from *mackintosh*, in reference to the mackintosh sheets placed under bathis in the old days. In fact, its ultimate origin is unknown, but an adjective *tosh*, neat, clean, first recorded for 1776, and a verb *tosh*, to make neat or clean (1826), are the immediate parents of the various school uses.

**tother** (Winchester, WB, NB), a private or preparatory school *totherite*, a boy from the same *tother*. An early form (WB) was *tother-school*, meaning, 1. a boy's former school, 2. any school not a public school, and consequently, as an adjective, 3. unseemly, un-Wykehamist.

**t'other'un, t'other'n** (Charterhouse, at least 1874-1919), wrongly spelt *tutherum* the expression is used as a noun without regard to its derivation, meaning a preparatory school—e.g. 'Where's your *t'other'un*?' a question generally addressed to new boys. Both this and the Winchester *tother* above date themselves to a period when the abbreviations involved were usual in cultivated speech.

**touchy** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), rather—e.g. '*Touchy, a lux*' (= 'Rather a fine thing').

**touze** (King's, Canterbury): see BREAD [1]

**tow** (Shrewsbury): see RUN.

**townee, townner**: see *cad*.

**towny**: see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**toys** (Winchester), originally a sort of bureau, but now applied to the small compartments provided for each individual in *chambers* and *mugging halls*. This is a well-known Wykehamist expression, which has been deliberately borrowed by some other schools—e.g. Bradfield (1902+), where *toise* was a classroom locker. In spite of the *s* (see under WINCHESTER), the word is singular. *Toytime* is the period of evening preparation, when each boy must sit in his *toys* to work. The derivation of *toys* is from Old French *toie*, Latin *theca*.

**track** (Warwick). see RUN.

**tramp** (Imperial Service College): see MASTER.

**trash**: see NONSENSE.

**trek** (Durham): see RUN.

**TRENT COLLEGE:** see *dubbin* (MAID)

**tripe:** see NONSENSE.

**trump:** see APPROVAL.

**tubby:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**tubing** (Pocklington G S.): see *suck*.

**tuck:** the classical school slang expression for food of the edible kind, not provided by the authorities. Such food is generally sold in a *tuck-shop* (or, since the Oxford -er suffix became fashionable, a *tucker*), kept in a *tuck-box*, and may even arrive from home in a *tuck-parcel*. The origin of the word is somewhat uncertain; but the earliest form in which it appears is *tuck-out* (=a hearty meal), and it has been suggested that it denotes a meal which removes the tucks or creases from the trousers or waistcoat. The present school use appears to date from the beginning of the last century, and continues with unabated vitality. It is, however, by no means universal, and in some schools may even be taboo—e.g. Malvern (1902+), where the equivalent was *grub* (q.v. for special uses). Bradford Grammar School (1930+) used *tig*, perhaps a mere corruption of *tuck*.

Other synonyms are *sock*<sup>1</sup> (Eton), *stodge*<sup>1</sup> (Rugby), *victual* (Bootham, 1925), *sink* (Leys, PSWB). None of these is used exactly like *tuck*. reference should be made to each for the special idioms connected with it.

A few general words for food are *peck* (hence *peckish*, hungry), *prog* (Forest, 1920+), which dates from the seventeenth century and is included by Johnson among the low words which he so delighted to condemn, *fag* (Christ's Hospital, c. 1790, as recorded by Leigh Hunt: see under GREEK), *stuff* (Colston's, 1887), *neck* (Forest, 1920=)

Other relevant information will be found under *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *gut*. BREAD, *crug*: CAKE. PUDDING: *gag*, *noggy*.

*tug*<sup>1</sup> (Eton). an opprobrious name for a Colleger, of considerable age. It is generally derived from Latin *togatus* (=gowned), since the Collegers wear gowns, but according to 'Eton' (1831) Collegers were then called *tug-muttons* (=gluttons, in general slang), which points

to a less decorous origin. *Tuggery* was at one time used to denote College, the abode of *tugs*.

**tug<sup>2</sup>** (Winchester, WB), common, ordinary, stale (hence *tugs*=stale news: *tug-clothes*=ordinary clothes: *tug-jaw*=wearisome talk). According to the current NB it now also=absolute, with an adverb *tugly*. The derivation is unknown: it may conceivably be the same as the Eton word above.

**tund** (Winchester)· see CANE, LATIN [3]

**turf** (Harrow)· see KICK.

**turn** (Harrow and elsewhere). A master is said to *turn* a boy's work, if he refuses to accept it.

For synonyms, see *bottle*, *bowl*, *cropple*, *floor*, *plough*, *ship*, *skew*.

**turn up** (Marlborough): see CANE

**Tuz** (Felsted): see *Bags*.

**tuzher** (Bootham, 1925), break. one of the most curious Bootham words, possibly an original coinage, though these are very rare. The spelling is an attempt to render phonetically a pronunciation equivalent to the French *j*—e.g. in *jour*.

**twaddle**: see NONSENSE.

**twang**: see PUNISHMENT (various) [2]

**twank** (Durham): see CANE.

**tweak** (Shrewsbury)· see *blood*.

**Twig** (Marlborough): see HEADMASTER.

**twig** (Harrow, Christ's Hospital): see *cop*.

**twirp, twirt** (Shrewsbury): see *cheek*.

**twoster** (Winchester, WB), a twisted stick: see under WINCHESTER for other examples of Wykehamist mispronunciation.

**underschool** (Lancing): see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

UNIVERSITY SLANG is itself a subject of great complexity and interest. We are here concerned only with words which the schools and universities have in common, of which there are a considerable number. It is not surprising that vocabulary should pass from the schools to the universities, but the contrary process also takes<sup>2</sup> place, and has been the means of introducing certain very distinctive idioms into the speech of schools. There are

several ways in which such transfers might occur: through old boys visiting their former schools, through masters appointed direct from the universities, and especially through family connections and the other channels by which slang of every kind spreads in the ordinary way. Yet it is not possible to say of any one word how it reached the schools; nor, indeed, with any real certainty, except in a few special cases, whether a particular word did in fact originate at the universities.

Among words which are almost certainly products of the universities may be mentioned *coach*, *cram*, *grind*, *floor*, *gravel* (see each separately); *plough*, *pluck* (see under *plough*); *hobby*, *plug*, *pony* (see under *crib*<sup>1</sup>). All of these are intimately connected with the business of passing examinations, and some of them have perhaps had only a very limited use outside the universities. Others of the same kind are *funk*, said to be Oxford slang, *chum*, *blazer*, *sweater*, *debag* and *beaver* (see each separately).

Many other words may be of this type. The 'Gradus ad Cantabrigiam,' a glossary of Cambridge slang published in 1803, for example, gives as Cambridge slang the following expressions which are now definitely school or general slang: *bogs* (=lavatories), *to cap* (=to salute by raising the cap), *to cat* (=to vomit), *to cut* chapel, etc., *to dish* (=to spoil), *to fag* (=to work hard), *to row* a room. It must presumably be inferred that in 1803 at any rate they were not well known outside Cambridge.

The notorious *-er* suffix is another university contribution to school slang. Though it is by no means certain that the habit of abbreviating words in this way started at a university, there is no doubt that Oxford has played the chief part in its dissemination. See the special article *-ER SUFFIX* for a discussion of the whole question.

**up.** At Eton, Harrow and some other schools a boy is *up* when he is in school, and *up to* the master whose class he is attending. A Winchester variant makes a boy go *up to books* (see *book*<sup>1</sup> for a discussion of this curious term). he is also *up to books* when he gets there. The idiom is officially accepted, and occurs in the school rules.

See also *down*.

**UPPINGHAM:** see

*bucked* (buck [12])

*groize* (oil)

*polly* (PREFECT)

*sass* (cheek)

*tonk* (CANE)

*waas, wass* (RUN)

**usher:** see MASTER.

**valet** (Winchester). see *fag*.<sup>1</sup>

**vex:** see CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, EXCLAMATIONS.

**vic** (Felsted): see WARNING CRIES.

**victual** (Bootham, 1925), as a verb, to feed (trans.) or eat (intrans.)—e.g. 'He *victualled* me in his study'; as a noun, a feast—e.g. 'a bedroom *victual*' = a surreptitious dormitory feast.

See also *brew*,<sup>1</sup> *find*, *grub*, *gut*, *sink*, *sock*,<sup>1</sup> *stodge*,<sup>1</sup> *tuck*.

**vish, vishy** (Christ's Hospital): see ANGRY, CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**vulgus** (Winchester): see LATIN [2]

**waas, wass** (Uppingham): see RUN.

**waffle** (Durham, PSWB), to talk nonsense: from dialect.

**waft** (Oundle): see DISAPPROVAL.

**wallop:** see *lick*.

**wanker** (Felsted, PSWB, 1892+), a bloater: supposedly *stinker*, *stwanke*, *wanker*.

**WARNING CRIES** are still a daily necessity in most schools, and a number of very ancient words used for this purpose are still common. The most familiar are the Latin *cave* (=beware), and in northern schools especially *nix*, which appears to have been current originally among factory hands and the like. Both these words are also used as nouns (see under MASTER). The boy who is placed to watch for the approach of a master is said to *keep nix*, *cave*, etc.

The following are synonyms less widely used or perhaps obsolete:

**bite** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840; Charterhouse): a word of somewhat mysterious history. In thieves' slang it meant *Sold!* or *Stung!* from an old use of *bite*, meaning cheat, swindle, steal. This usage became polite slang in the eighteenth century (an article in 'The Spectator' for October 8, 1712,

satirizes the vogue), but there is no indication how it came to be transferred to schools as a cry of warning.

**chucks** (PSWB)

**lobster**: quoted by Farmer in PSWB as in general use.

**stow** (Colston's, 1887): used also with the name of the master—e.g. 'Stow Smith!' It seems to be an adaptation of *Stow it*=Keep quiet.

**tick** (Brighton, 1920+), **titch** (Cheltenham, 1916+): these two must certainly be forms of the same word, but their origin is obscure.

**vic** (Felsted, PSWB); also *to keep vic*.

At Winchester a century ago a loud hiss emitted by the boy on guard took the place of a specific word of warning.

**WARWICK SCHOOL**: see

*Bogey* (HEADMASTER)

*heavy*

*prig* (*bag*<sup>2</sup>)

*track* (RUN)

**wash**: see DRINK.

**watch out** (Winchester, WB, NB), to field at cricket. With *seek out*, *look out* and various other synonyms for *field*, *watch out* was in common use during the eighteenth century, not merely at Winchester: like many other Winchester expressions, it is a survival.

**water** (Westminster, PSWB), boating or rowing—e.g. 'Water is in a very flourishing condition.'

**wax, waxy**: see ANGRY.

**weak-kneed**: see DISAPPROVAL.

**weed** (Alley's): see MASTER.

**WELLINGTON**: see

*bumph-hunt* (*bumph*)

*bunk*

*butcher about*

*grubbies* (*grub*)

*jarrehoe* (MAN SERVANT)

*jolly-ho* (MAN SERVANT)

*squealer* (NEW BOY)

*swipes*

*tish* (DORMITORY)

**wench**: see WOMAN.

**WESTMINSTER**. 'Westminster has since the 1880's had the most highly developed and remarkable of all the

public school slangs,' says Partridge in 'Slang Today and Yesterday.' The statement is hardly borne out by facts. Westminster certainly possesses many interesting slang terms, to which reference is made below, but no more than several other schools, such as Eton, Charterhouse, and Shrewsbury, and nothing like as many as Christ's Hospital or Winchester. Glossaries of Westminster slang are to be found in Markham's 'Recollections of a Town Boy at Westminster, 1849-55' (1903), Forshall's 'Westminster School' (1884), and Airey's 'Westminster' (1902). There is no evidence that the speech of the school is affected by the fact of its being in London (any more than is the case with Charterhouse and Christ's Hospital, both formerly in London), and in general Westminster slang, with its touches of Latin and its feet firmly planted on the ground, is like that of the other older public schools. See:

<i>bag</i> (DRINK)	<i>hander</i> (PUNISHMENT
<i>beggar</i>	(various) [1])
<i>bevers</i>	<i>muck</i> [3]
<i>blck</i>	<i>muzz</i> (swat)
<i>book</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>pleb</i> (LATIN [3])
<i>box</i> ( <i>bag</i> <sup>2</sup> )	<i>poser</i>
<i>buckhorse</i> (HIT)	<i>real razor</i> (raise)
<i>caulk</i> (THROW)	<i>remi</i> (LATIN [2])
<i>cheek</i>	<i>sci, ski, sky</i> (LATIN [3])
<i>chuck</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Shell</i> (FORMS, NOMEN-
<i>cock-shy</i>	CLATURE OF)
<i>desking</i> (PUNISHMENT	<i>skee</i>
(various) [3])	<i>substance and shadow</i>
<i>dor</i> (LATIN [2])	(NEW BOY)
<i>down</i>	<i>water</i>
<i>greeze</i> (CROWD)	<i>youle</i> (THROW)

**wet:** see DISAPPROVAL.

**whiff, whiffy:** see SMELL.

**whop** (HARROW): see CANE.

**willy**<sup>1</sup> (Shrewsbury, 1938), a ball: perhaps *pill*, *bill*, *willy*.

**willy**<sup>2</sup> (Bootham): see *effort*.

**wimp** (St Bees): see WOMAN.

**WINCHESTER.** No school can rival Winchester either in the quantity or the interest of its particular slang, and no other school has made such systematic efforts to record and perpetuate it. Several vocabularies of the Winchester speech have been published at various times, the best of these being R. G. K. Wrench's 'Winchester Word-Book,' first published in 1891, and re-issued in a revised edition in 1901. It is still found necessary to provide a glossary for new boys and others, known as the 'Notion Book,' a *notion* being the Winchester term for one of these distinctive idioms. There is thus plenty of material for a very full study of Winchester slang. In the present volume will be found all except place-names, technicalities, and certain trivial and unimportant Winchester idioms, each in its alphabetical place or otherwise, as indicated in the list at the end of this article. References are mostly to the 1901 Word-Book (referred to as WB) and the 1930 Notion Book (NB).

Winchester slang is chiefly remarkable for the number of words of good old English stock, which it has preserved in active use long after they have become obsolete elsewhere. Thus *cud*, *fardel*, *ferk*, *roke*, *swink*, *thoke* and *tight* (= *tite*) all date from about the time of Chaucer or earlier, and have been out of general currency for four or five centuries. Seeing that a school generation is only some four or five years, it is very remarkable that such words should have survived, and they are actually most of them still current. Many other words, though familiar in appearance to modern readers, are used in unusual senses, which are either survivals of earlier usages (e.g. *abroad*, *continent*, *dole*, *knuckle*), or perhaps extensions of the accepted meaning (e.g. *baulk*, *blow*, *dock*, *jockey*, *junket*). Others again appear to be borrowed from dialect, some from Hampshire dialect, as might be expected (e.g. *frount*, *lobster*), but most from more widely scattered sources (e.g. *brum*, *clow*, *con*, *glope*, *spre*, *sus*, *work*). Latin plays a more prominent part in Winchester slang than in that of any other school: and in addition there are many other words borrowed from ordinary colloquial usage, and quite a large group (e.g. *bangy*,

*duck, gosh, kid, poon, sines, speg*), for which no very obvious explanation is forthcoming. In short, the Winchester vocabulary provides material for a philologist's discussion in itself.

As an illustration of Wykehamist slang in general we may quote a sentence from Wrench's introduction:

'At Winchester we never send a person, but we *ferk* him: we are never idle, but we *thoke* plentifully: a thing is not pretty, but *cud*: when *dead-brum* we get some *bulky paz* to *pledge* us *dibs*: we *mug* at *toy-time* on *remedies*: we *splice* rocks: we get *planted* and *killed*, for it *works* dreadfully: we *come* abroad after having been *continent* in a *sick-house*.'

Winchester, too, has certain peculiar methods of word-formation, abbreviation and pronunciation.

The suffix denoting the agent has long been *-ster* in preference to *-er* (not indeed an exclusively Wykehamist trick)—e.g. *bakester* (=idler), *brockster* (=bully), *funkster* (=funk), *mugster* (=swot), *quillster* (=sucker), *shirkster* (=shirker), *thokester* (=idler).

Certain nouns in *-ation* and *-ition* (or its equivalent) are abbreviated *-a* and *-i*—e.g. *examina* (=examination), *tui* (=tuition). see under ABBREVIATION.

There is a tendency to add an unnecessary and non-plural *s* to some words—e.g. *Hills* (=St Catherine's Hill), *Meads*, *Sands*, *crocketis* (=cricket), *toys* (=a boy's private compartment).

Various unorthodox pronunciations have at various times been fashionable, of which the following are examples illustrating principles doubtless applied to other words as well: *crocketis* (=cricket), *cropple* (=cripple, with an imposition), *twoster* (=a twisted stick): *tolly* (=candle—i.e. tallow), *yolly* (=post-chaise, generally yellow): *roush* (=rush), *housile* (=hustle). *caves* (=calves), *haves* (=halves—i.e. half Wellington boots): *chince* (=chance). Some of these clearly belong to generations long past, and are now defunct: others—e.g. *tolly*—are not absolutely exclusive to Winchester.

See also *ziph* for a crude form of schoolboy speech sometimes associated with Winchester.

The following words are treated elsewhere:

<i>abroad</i>	<i>dole</i>
<i>abs</i> (LATIN [4])	<i>domum</i> (LATIN [1])
<i>back up</i>	<i>don</i> (MASTER)
<i>bake</i>	<i>duck</i>
<i>baker</i>	<i>dump</i>
<i>bangy</i>	<i>english</i> (crib <sup>1</sup> )
<i>barter</i>	<i>fardel</i>
<i>battlings</i> (battels)	<i>ferk</i>
<i>baulk</i>	<i>field</i>
<i>bevers</i>	<i>finjy</i> (fen)
<i>bibler</i>	<i>foricus</i> (LATIN [1])
<i>blow</i>	<i>frater</i> (LATIN [1], people)
<i>book</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>frouf</i> (ANGRY)
<i>book</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>genuine</i>
<i>bowl</i>	<i>glope</i>
<i>brock</i> (BULLY)	<i>gosh</i>
<i>brum</i>	<i>gowner</i> (worms)
<i>buck</i> (buck [3])	<i>greasing</i> (BULLY)
<i>buck down</i> (buck [8])	<i>half</i>
<i>bucksome</i> (buck [9])	<i>hard up</i>
<i>buck up</i> (buck [7])	<i>hot</i>
<i>bulky</i>	<i>hot up</i> (PROMOTION)
<i>bust</i>	<i>inferior</i> (LATIN [2])
<i>canvas</i>	<i>infra-dig</i> (LATIN [4])
<i>chinner</i>	<i>jig</i>
<i>chiz</i> (crib <sup>1</sup> )	<i>jockey</i>
<i>classicus</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>john</i> (crib <sup>1</sup> )
<i>clow</i> (HIT)	<i>junket</i>
<i>cob</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>kid</i> <sup>2</sup>
<i>con</i> (FALSE ETYMOLOGY, HIT)	<i>knuckle down</i>
<i>continent</i> (abroad)	<i>licet</i> (LATIN [2])
<i>course</i> (LATIN [2])	<i>lob</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>crocketts</i>	<i>lob</i> <sup>2</sup> (blub)
<i>cropple</i>	<i>luxer</i>
<i>crump</i>	<i>man</i> (BOY)
<i>cud</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Medes and Persians</i>
<i>cut into</i> (CANE)	(BULLY)
<i>disper</i>	<i>mons</i>
<i>dock</i>	<i>mug</i> <sup>3</sup>
	<i>muttoner</i>

*nail* (cop)  
*nestor*  
*nihil-ad-rem* (LATIN [4])  
*oil* (oil [8])  
*ostiarius* (LATIN [2])  
*pater* (NEW BOY)  
*pax*<sup>2</sup>  
*pempe*  
*pitch-up*  
*plant*  
*pledge*  
*pledge you*  
*plough*  
*pluck* (plough)  
*poon*<sup>2</sup>  
*poser*  
*preces*  
*pruff*  
*purl*  
*quill* (suck)  
*quirister*  
*rabbiter* (HIT)  
*raise*  
*ramrod*  
*remedy* (LATIN [2])  
*rock*  
*roke*  
*scadger*  
*scaldings* (EXCLAMATIONS)  
*schitt* (worms)  
*sconce*  
*scourge* (CANE)  
*scouring* (bibler)  
*scrubbing* (bibler)  
*scrubbing forms* (BIRCH)  
*semper* (LATIN [1])  
*shig* (MONEY)  
*shirk* (shirk [3-7])  
*shuffle*

*sick-house*  
*sines* (BREAD [1])  
*snicks, to go* (dib up)  
*socius* (LATIN [2])  
*sock*<sup>2</sup>  
*soror* (LATIN [1], people)  
*spec*  
*spcg*  
*splice* (THROW)  
*sport*  
*spot*  
*spree* (cheek, PRIVILEGE-TABOO)  
*square round*  
*standing under the nail*  
 (PUNISHMENT [various]  
 [8])  
*straw*  
*sus*  
*sweat* (fag,<sup>1</sup> swat)  
*swink*  
*tag*<sup>1</sup>  
*tardy*  
*tégé*  
*thoke*  
*tight*  
*tin-gloves* (BULLY)  
*toll* (RUN)  
*tother*  
*toys*  
*tug*<sup>2</sup>  
*tund* (CANE, LATIN [3])  
*twoster*  
*valet* (fag<sup>1</sup>)  
*vulgus* (LATIN [2])  
*watch out*  
*work*  
*worms*  
*ziph*

**wink** (Marlborough): see MAID.

**wog** (Dulwich): see DISAPPROVAL.

**WOMAN.** Self-consciousness gives a derisive and rather off-hand tone to many of the school slang expressions applied to members of the opposite sex. One of the commonest terms is *hag*, which is applied to women of all ages: some schools, however, reserve it for the maids (see under **MAID**), while others (e.g. Charterhouse, 1915+; Haileybury, 1923+; Oundle, 1930+) apply it, quite respectfully, to the matrons. *Ma* is sometimes used of middle-aged women (e.g. Bradfield, 1918+), or more specifically of matrons (e.g. Rossall, 1913+). St Bees (1915+) used *wimp* (a corruption of *women*) and the Arabic *bint* of women in general, while *skinny lz* was applied, almost as a nickname, to any elderly woman. Young women or girls are most often *tarts*, *birds* or even *dames*, in accordance with the general fashion. But Bootham (1925) used *betty*, Durham (PSWB, before 1900) had the mysterious *nezzar*, and Pocklington Grammar School (1923+) preferred the good old English *wench*.

**wonky**, 1. lop-sided, 2. out of order, applicable to a person—e.g. 'I'm feeling a bit *wonky*'; a machine—e.g. 'This bike's gone all *wonky*'; or indeed to anything which can get out of order. *Squiffy* (which outside schools = drunk) is synonymous in both senses, *cock-eyed* mainly in the first, and *dicky* in the second.

**woods** (Marlborough): see **LAVATORIES**.

**wooston** (Christ's Hospital, c. 1840), pronounced *wissent*, according to Blanch in 'The Bluecoat Boy,' and sometimes spelt *whissin*; an adverb = very, very much—e.g. 'Wooston a jolly fellow,' 'A wooston jolly fellow,' 'I am wooston chaffy' (=pleased), 'Wooston a lux' (=a very fine thing). Various suggestions have been made as to its origin, as that it is a corruption of *wasn't it* and *worse than*, but there seems to be no doubt that it represents the well-known sixteenth-century expletive epithet *whoreson*—e.g. 'whoreson cold' (Shakespeare), 'a whoreson rich inn-keeper' (Dekker and Webster). It is probably the realization of its origin which has caused the word to die after several centuries of colloquial use.

**work** (Winchester, WB), to hurt, both transitively and intransitively. Such a sense is common in dialect—e.g. ‘Oh, how my head *works*,’ ‘*belly-work*,’ etc.

**worked up**: see ANGRY.

**work off** (Eton). see CANE.

**worms** (Winchester): the goal-line in Winchester football. There is no goal as such, but formerly a boy known as *goal* stood with his legs wide apart, and a gown rolled up at each foot, serving the double purpose of umpire and goal-posts. If the ball passed over his head or between his legs it was a *goal*, counting three points; over the gowns a *gownner*, worth two points; over any other part of *worms* a *schitt*, worth one point. These distinctions have long been obsolete. the word *schitt*, according to the PSWB, dropped out of use about 1860.

See also *bust*, *canvas*, *hot*.<sup>1</sup> *plant*, *tag*.<sup>1</sup>

**wowser** (Dulwich): see DISAPPROVAL.

**wreck**<sup>1</sup>: see DISAPPROVAL.

**wreck**<sup>2</sup> (a room): see *rag*.

**wunner**: see APPROVAL.

**yard** (Dulwich). see HAT.

**yarder** (Harrow), cricket or football on the school yard.

**yards** (Harrow). In Harrow football, if the ball is caught, the catcher is allowed a free-kick after a preliminary run of not more than three strides: this is called *taking yards* (cf. the Winchester *bust*, *q.v.*). In making his catch the catcher *gets yards*: to give a catch=*to give yards*: to cover the distance run when taking a kick in three strides=*to step yards*: to prevent someone from *taking yards*=*to knock down yards*.

See also *base*, *sky*.

**yark** (Durham): see CANE.

**yellow-hammer** (Christ's Hospital): see PUNISHMENT (various) [3]

**york** (Bootham, 1925), to rain: apparently a hit at the York weather (Bootham School being situated in York)

**youle** (Westminster): see THROW.

**young 'un**: see *people*.

**ziph**, a ‘rude mode of disguising English,’ associated with Winchester by Hotten in his ‘Slang Dictionary’

(1870): he says that it was in use there during the seventeenth century and probably earlier, and implies that the celebrated Winchester speech was this and nothing more. New boys, according to Hotten, were taught *ziph* for the fixed fee of half a guinea. One of Wrench's objects in publishing his 'Word Book' (see under WINCHESTER) was to refute this suggestion.

The secret of *ziph*, according to Hotten, was as follows:

'Repeat the vowel or diphthong of every syllable, prefixing to the vowel so repeated the letter B, and placing the accent on the intercalated syllable. Thus, for example, "Shall we go away in an hour?"—"Shagall wege gogo agawagay igin agan hougour?"'

The process (or some slight variation of it) will be familiar to many, for *ziph* has been and still is used, especially among small boys, who very often feel the need to converse in a way unintelligible to outsiders.

*zyders* (Felsted, 1930+), the washing places: probably from Zuyder Zee.

